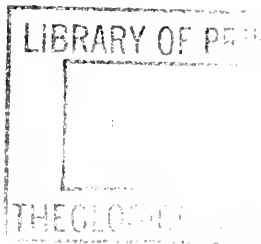


EX
3074
.07
M3



BX 8074 .07 M3
Mattes, John Caspar, 1876-
1948.
The significance of
ordination

The
Significance of Ordination

John C. Mattes

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ORDINATION

JOHN C. MATTES

Before we can discuss the question of ordination by itself or in relation to those who come to us from the ministry of other communions, it will be necessary to recall certain doctrinal facts as these have been elaborated by theologians and have been exemplified in the actual practice of the Church. The following discussion aims primarily to present in convenient form some of the sources, particularly some, like the early ordination certificates, that have been more or less neglected in the older treatises on the subject.

Luther shall have the first word, after him some of the less known reformers, then the Church Orders, while a very brief outline of the history of ordination and some of the opinions of later theologians shall form the conclusion.

The starting point of any discussion must be a clear apprehension of the fact that the Church has always taught that

I. The Ministry is a Divine Institution.

From apostolic times it has been customary for the Church to appoint men to the office of the Ministry by some public rite, that, almost invariably, included the laying on of hands of the presbytery as an outward sign of such appointment. Just what significance was to be attached to the rite itself depended on the prevailing conception of the nature of the office. When it was regarded as an order of peculiarly endowed priests, the act of ordination, quite naturally, came to be regarded as the actual impartation of certain magical powers and the investiture of the ordinand with an indelible character. This conception of ordination and the ministry Luther soon saw was the

foundation of Roman superstition. The questions of episcopal ordination and of the primacy of the pope were only secondary outgrowths and logical developments of such sacerdotalism, for sacerdotalism is bound to beget a hierarchy.

Accordingly Luther attacked the root of the evil. He proclaimed in unmistakable terms the universal priesthood of all believers. As usual he pressed the matter under discussion to the most extreme statement, so that careless readers who fail to take into account his explicit statements concerning the office of the ministry, found elsewhere, or his later utterances, when a changed situation compelled him to maintain its dignity against the anarchistic ideas of the Anabaptists, are apt to fall into the error of thinking that Luther regarded the public ministry of the Word and Sacraments as nothing more than the voluntary limitation of the individual's rights. They try to make him responsible for the idea that it is only a creation of the congregation. Luther indeed said some things that, taken alone, sound that way, but nothing was further from his intention than a desire to deny the divine institution of the office or to confuse it with the spiritual priesthood. He carefully differentiates the two and insists on the divine origin of the ministry, even in those treatises in which he is most insistent on the spiritual priesthood. In the book *An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520, for example, he says: "For all Christians are truly in the spiritual estate and there is no difference between them except that occasioned by their office." But that all Christians have the same qualifications does not remove the real distinction between them occasioned by the office nor give each individual the right to assume its functions. "Because we are all alike priests does not give the right to each one to push himself forward or to venture to undertake without our consent and election that which belongs to all alike. For no one may assume to himself

what belongs to all without their common consent and command.¹

So the ministerial "character" is not a special endowment given by the bishop's ordination, but the needed qualifications reside in every Christian. This truth brings with it the danger of a false conclusion, that because every Christian possesses the qualifications therefore every Christian has a right to assume the office of the ministry. Not only are women and little children expressly excluded from its exercise in the New Testament but not all grown men are to become public ministers. *The office belongs to the whole Church* and is to be exercised by the individual only as he is called and commissioned by the entire congregation of believers through its representatives.²

A little later in the Book *De instituendis ministris Ecclesiae*, 1523, he becomes more explicit and while maintaining that in cases of necessity the laity may baptize and preach they are not to administer the Eucharist, even if they should be deprived of it during their whole lives, because this is not essential to salvation.³ Even such preaching he specifies later on shall

¹ "Dan alle Christen sein warhafftig geystlichs stands, unnd ist unter yhn kein unterscheyd, denn des ampts halben allein, wie Paulus i. Corint. xij. sagt, das wir alle sampt eyn Corper seinn, doch ein yglich glid sein eygen werck hat, damit es den andern dienet, das macht allis, das wir eine tauff, ein Evangelium eynen glauben haben, unnd sein gleyche Christen, den die tauff, Evangelium und glauben, die machen allein geistlich und Christen volck." W. 6, p. 407.

"Dan weyl wir alle gleich priester sein, musz sich niemant selb erfur thun und sich unterwinden, an unszer bewilligen und erwelen das zuthun, des wir alle gleychen gewalt haben, Den was gemeyne ist, mag niemant on der gemeyne willen und befehle an sich nehmen." W. 6, p. 408.

² Similar ideas are elaborated in *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium*, 1520. W. 6, pp. 564-567.

³ "Tutius enim et salubrius esset, quemlibet patremfamilias suae domui legere Euangelion et baptisare (quando id laicis permittit etiam totius orbis consensus et usus) eos qui sibi nascerentur, ac sic iuxta doctrinam Christi se et suos regere, etiam si tota vita vel non audeant vel non possint Eucharistiam sumere. Eucharistia enim non est sub periculum salutis necessaria, sufficit autem Euangelion et Baptismus, cum sola fides iustificet et sola Charitas bene vivat." *De Instituendis etc.* W. 12, p. 171.

be of a private and not of a public character. In replying to questions concerning the Sacrament addressed to him by some persons in Bohemia, probably about the year 1529, when answering the question "Whether it is permissible, when one comes under the papacy to an evangelical who is not a preacher and requests instruction from him in the Word of God, for the latter to do so and with what modesty he shall undertake the task?" Luther replies, "If he be asked to give instruction he may tell his neighbor the nature of his faith and what should be believed, in the same way that two companions converse together. But he shall not attempt to preach, nor assume the office of a preacher, nor invade the prerogatives of the preachers."⁴

Just how highly Luther esteemed the office of the ministry as a divine institution will be seen in this statement taken from the *Adventspostilla* of 1522; a statement that certainly leaves no room for the idea that the ministry is a mere outgrowth of the spiritual priesthood or a mere delegation of authority from the congregation: "Mark well, good people, that for St. Paul to serve Christ and to serve God means primarily to discharge an office that Christ has committed to him, namely preaching, which is a service that proceeds from Christ, not to Christ, and that does not come from us but to us."⁵

⁴ "Die sechst Frag. Ob einer auch ditz zu thun Macht habe: wann er im Bapstumb zu einem Evangelischen käme und begehret von ihm, ihn zu unterrichten in dem Wort Gottes und dieweil er kein Prediger ist, mit was Bescheidenheit er solchs thun solle? Antwort, Wird er gebeten ein Unterricht zu thun, mag er als seinem Nächsten erzählen, wie er glaubt und was zu glauben sei, wie sonst zwen gesellen miteinander schwatzen. Aber predigen und Predigamt soll er sich nicht unterwinden noch den Predigern in ihr Ampt greifen." Enders, *Luther's Briefwechsel*, 18, p. 140.

⁵ "Höre doch lieber mensch, Christo dienen und got dienen, heyst furnemlich bey S. Paulo eyn ampt furen, das Christus yhm befolhen hatt, nemlich das predigen, es ist eyn dienst, der von Christo, nicht tzu Christo gehet, und der nit von uns, szondern tzu uns kompt." *Ep. for III Advent. I Cor. 4: 1-5. W. 10, I, 2, p. 122.*

As the years went on Luther became most emphatic in insisting on the divine institution of the ministry as a distinct office. In *Ein Sermon das men solle kinder zur Schulen halten*, 1530, he repeatedly refers to this fact. "I hope," he says, "that all the faithful and all who wish to be called Christians know full well that the clerical office has been appointed and established by God not with silver and gold but with the precious blood and bitter death of His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. For the Sacraments indeed flow out of his wounds (as has been portrayed in pictures) and he certainly earned very dearly the privilege of having in the whole world such an office, to preach, baptize, loose, bind and administer the Sacrament, to console, warn, admonish with the Word of God, and whatever else belongs to the office of the care of souls."

"In fine, if we wish to praise God Himself we will also praise His Word and the office of preaching. For it is God's office and Word."⁶

II. The Ministry is an Office of the Whole Church.

In the New Testament the office of the Holy Ministry is regarded as one connected with the whole Church and belonging to the whole Church. The representatives of the Church are to ordain elders in every city not merely the local congregations, who on occasion elect their pastors. Their appointment is made and confirmed by those who come as representatives of

⁶ "Ich hoffe ia das die gleubigen und was Christen heissen wil, fast wol wissen, das der geistliche stand sey von Gott eingesetzt und gestiftet nicht mit gold noch silber, sondern mit dem theuren blüte und bitteren tode seines einigen sons unsers herrn Jhesu Christi, Denn auss seinen wunden fliessen warlich (wie man vor zeiten auch auff die briefe malete) die Sacrament und hatts warlich theur erarnt das man ynn der gantzen wellt solch ampt hat, zu predigen teuffen lösen binden, sacrament reichen, trosten warnen vermanen, mit Gottes wort und was mehr zum ampt der seelsorgen gehoret." *Ein Sermon das man solle kinder zur Schulen halten*, 1530, W. 30, II, pp. 526-527. See also pp. 528 and 530. "Summa, wenn man Gott selbs ausloben wird, so wird man sein wort und predig-ampt auch ausloben, Denn es ist Gottes ampt und wort." *ibid.* p. 540.

the whole body of believers—the ministry. The idea of a clerical order is not involved in any way, nor implied in any sense, but it is the recognition of the fact that the office has been given the whole Church and that consequently the whole Church is to be represented as far as possible in the appointment of men to that office. The office is not something that develops out of each little group, but, as Luther has so clearly stated, something that is given by God to the Church. We are all familiar with the practical consequence of this fact, that each congregation does not have to approve anew the teacher who comes to it with the stamp of approval from the representatives of the whole Church, for these representatives have also been its representatives. Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus, the hundreds of thousands that came after them have been approved once by competent authority, and so long as there is no question as to doctrine or difference of teaching, either in them or in those who have approved them, that is enough.

Long after apostolic days the same idea was current in the Church. Perhaps it will be most succinctly stated by quoting from an author whose theology we cannot, of course, endorse, but who has stated this one fact in a very clear way, though unfortunately in his own treatise to make a false deduction from it. “St. Gregory Nazianzen,” he says, “calls St. Cyprian a universal bishop, ‘presiding,’ as the same author (Bingham) presently quotes Gregory, ‘not only over the church of Carthage and Africa, but over all the regions of the West and over the East, and South, and Northern parts of the world also,’—Bingham continues ‘(Gregory) says the same of Athanasius; that in being made Bishop of Alexandria he was also made Bishop of the whole world. Chrysostom, in like manner styles Timothy, Bishop of the universe.’”⁷

⁷ Quoted in Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. Ch. VI, § 2, p. 266 seq.

At the time of the Reformation the idea was by no means lost and its force was far more vividly felt than we are apt to realize. Here we do not have to go to the private writings of the Reformers but we have the testimony of public documents. The statements of the Smalkald Articles are, of course, very familiar but the implications of statements found in many of the earliest ordination certificates have been largely ignored, although Drews has pointed out the importance of taking them carefully into account. They are likewise significant in understanding the true position of Luther on this question for he was the very last one who would put his name to a public document, in whose composition he had a part or else had officially approved (which is as true of the ordination certificates as of the Smalkald Articles, or of Melancthon's Appendix to the latter) as a mere formality, or without due consideration of their contents. They represent his mature judgment and should help to determine the meaning of more informal and hastily written private writings, rather than a reversed proceeding.

In the Smalkald Articles there are two statements which emphasize the relation of each minister to the entire Church. One is the statement that, "The Council of Nice determined also that bishops should be elected by their own churches, in the presence of a neighboring bishop or of several."⁸ The other is a reference to Cyprian: "The same was observed also in the West and in the Latin churches as Cyprian and Augustine testify. For Cyprian says in his fourth letter to Cornelius: 'For which reason you must diligently observe and keep the divine observance and apostolic practice, as it is also observed among us and in almost all the provinces, that for celebrating properly ordinances (ut ad ordinations rite celebrandus) all the neighboring bishops of the same provinces should assemble

⁸ Canon 4 of the Council. The text of the Canon, in Latin, together with other references to similar statements can be found in Walch's *Introductio in Libros Ecclesiae Lutheranae Symbolicos*, p. 529.

and the bishop should be chosen in the presence of the people, who have most fully known the life of each one, which we also see was done among us in the ordination of our colleague, Sabinus; so that by the judgment of the bishops who had assembled in their presence, the episcopate was conferred and hands imposed upon him.’

“Cyprian calls this custom a divine tradition and an apostolic observance and affirms that it was observed in almost all the provinces.”⁹

After July 6, 1539, similar references to the Council of Nice are found in a number of ordination certificates. It is given as a precedent for ordaining men for service in other localities. The neighboring clergy are to do so as representatives of the universal Church.¹⁰

Reference to the passage in Cyprian was also made in defending the episcopal consecration of Nicholas von Amsdorf.

So clear was all this in Luther’s mind that against the objection of Bugenhagen, who thought a candidate should be

⁹ Jacobs’ Ed. of Book of Concord. pp. 340-341.

¹⁰ See, for example, the ordination certificate of Benedict Schumann, dated Dec. 18, 1539, though the ordination took place April 22, 1537. (See note in Enders, 18, p. 1). “———Cum autem Ecclesia Naumburgensis eum vocasset ad munus docendi evangelii ac petivisset, ut ordinatione publica confirmaretur vocatio, nos explorata ejus eruditione comperimus eum summam doctrinae christianae recte intelligere et amplecti puram et catholicam evangelii sententiam, quam et Ecclesia nostra profitetur, et abhorre ab omnibus fanaticis opinionibus damnatis judicio catholicae ecclesiae Christi. —— Quare cum officium nostrum non debeat deesse vicinis ecclesiis, et Nicena synodus pie decreverit, ut a vicinis ecclesiis ordinatio petatur, nos huic Magistro Benedicto publica ordinatione in ecclesia commendavimus ministerium docendi evangelii et sacramenta in Evangelio instituta administrandi juxta vocationem etc.” Enders, *Luther’s Briefwechsel*, 11, pp. 227-28.

Similarly the certificates of Johann Fischer, April 18, 1540 (Enders, 13, pp. 35-36), of Philipp Trebnitz, April 18, 1540 (Enders, 18, p. 52), and of Lampert Tile, Dec. 1, 1540 (Enders, 13, p. 221).

ordained by his own presbyters, he ordained a certain John _____, (His last name is lost).¹²

III. Ordination is an Appointing to this Divinely Instituted Office of the Whole Church through the Representatives of the Whole Church.

When Luther expressed the opinion that "Ordination shall be considered the vocation and commissioning to the pastoral office,"¹³ he was stating an idea that was frequently repeated in the ordination certificates; that ordination was the commissioning of men to the ministry by the authority of the Church.¹⁴

Similar ideas were expressed in the Wittenberg Articles of 1536, where in the ninth article "Concerning Church Order" is the statement, "Concerning the eighth and fourteenth articles we agree in teaching that no one in Christendom shall openly teach and administer the Sacraments unless he has been regularly called by those who have the right and power to call and admit men to the ministry of the Church."¹⁵

¹² See the letter of Luther to Friedr. Myconius, Oct. 24, 1535.

¹³ "Remittimus vestrum Joannem per vos vocatum et electum, per nos quoque examinatum, et publice coram nostra Ecclesia inter orationes et laudes Dei in vestrum comministrum (comministerium) ordinatum et confirmatum ad mandatum Principis nostri licet. D. Pomeranus non satis facilis ad hoc fuerit, ut qui adhuc sentit, quemlibet in Ecclesia sua ordinandum per suos presbyteros." Enders 10, p. 248.

¹⁴ "Denn ordinirn sol heissen und sein beruffen und befelhen das Pfarrampt." *Von der Winkelmesse und Pfaffenweihe*, 1533, W. 38, p. 238.

¹⁵ In one of the oldest of the certificates extant, that of Joachim Pogan, June 11, 1536, we find this statement: "Itaque iudicauimus eum idoneum esse ad ministerium euangelii et nostrum iuditium publicae ordinationis testimonio, quae nobis autoritate ecclesiae christi et mandato superiorum commissa est." Enders, 17, p. 357. Similar declarations are in the certificate given Heinrich Bock, May 17, 1540. (Enders, 13, p. 58) and that of Lampert Tile, Dec. 1, 1540. (Enders, 13, p. 221).

¹⁶ "Denn achten und virzehenden artickel belangende leren wir einrechtiglich, das niemand sol in der christenheit offentlich leren oder sacrament reichen, er sei dann ordentlich dazu beruffen von denen, die da recht und macht haben, kirchendiener zu beruffen und anzunehmen." *Die Wittenberger Artikel von 1536* (Artickel der Christlichen Lehr, von welchen die Legatten aus Engelland mit dem Herrn Doctor Martino gehandelt Anno 1536). *Quellenschriften zur Geschichte des Protestantismus*. 2 Heft, p. 55.

No thought of a superstitious character was associated with the rite, however, or any idea that it was the imparting of a magical gift or an indelible character. The rite was purposely purged of any such suggestions. In a letter written by Luther to Peter Hackenberg on December 16, 1530, he says, "Everywhere there is a great lack of faithful pastors, so that it is fitting that we begin to ordain or institute ministers by a proper rite, without tonsure, without chrism, without mitre, without gloves, without crosier, without censer, and finally without a bishop."¹⁸

One thing indeed was very clear in every ordination, that it was a testimonial, given by accredited representatives of the rightly teaching Church, to the doctrinal soundness of the ordinand, and attested his consequent qualification to be an accredited teacher of the whole Church. He was first examined before he was commissioned and his ordination was the certification of that fact, as well as his official authorization. Almost invariably after the statement that the ordinand has been tested as to the soundness of his faith, and the validity of his call has been established, there follows a "wherefore" or "therefore" that introduces the statement concerning his ordination. Because he is qualified he is ordained and his ordination is to be the certification of his moral and doctrinal qualifications.¹⁹

¹⁸ *Magna ubique penuria fidelium pastorum, ita ut prope sit, quo cogemur proprio ritu ordinare seu instituire ministros, sine rasura, sine unctura, sine infula, sine chirothecis, sine baculo et sine thuribulo, sine denique istis episcopis.*" Enders, 8, p. 332.

¹⁹ See also the following ordination certificates found in Enders as noted. Joachim Pogan, June 11, 1536, v. 17, p. 357; Bened. Schumann, April 22, 1537, v. 11, p. 227-228; Jacob Siegel, Oct. 7, 1537, v. 11, p. 278-279; Anton Otto, Oct. 27, 1538, v. 12, p. 22-23; Wenc. Kilman, July 13, 1539, v. 7, p. 131, (For the correct date of Kilman's certificate see note, Enders, v. 17, p. 238 seq.); Johann Fischer, April 18, 1540, v. 13, p. 35-36; Philipp Trebnitz of Bickel, April 18, 1540, v. 18, p. 52; Heinrich Bock, May 17, 1540, v. 13, p. 57-58; Lampert Tile, Dec. 1, 1540, v. 13, p. 221; Heinrich Lichtenberg, Jan. 10, 1543, v. 15, p. 87-88; Nik. Gallus, April 17, 1543, v. 15, p. 142-143; Barthol. Bomgartner, March 19, 1544, v. 15, p. 353; Theodor Fabricius, Aug. 3, 1544, v. 16, p. 63; Joh. Reibitz, Sep. 24, 1544, v. 16, p. 87; Christoph Longolius, Sep. 27, 1544, v. 16, p. 89; Kaspar Kretschmar, Nov. 5, 1544, v. 16, p. 105.

We shall touch on the actual history of the rite in a moment. At first it was little thought about. There was a supply of clergy on hand and there are even a few cases on record¹⁷ in which men were allowed to officiate on the strength of the call and examination, without ordination. But growing reflection as well as the exigencies of the times soon led to a better appreciation of the value and the practical necessity of the apostolic rite. Its scriptural authority was soon recognized and the rule laid down that it is not to be dispensed with. Even in the most unexpected connection we find an appreciation of the need of this public attestation of fitness and doctrinal soundness. Some of Luther's most extreme statements concerning the spiritual priesthood are to be found in the *De instituendis ministris Ecclesiae*, 1523. It is a book that must be used with caution according to Luther's own later statements and it grew out of a peculiar situation. The compact made with the Utraquists of Bohemia at Basel in 1433 had been repudiated by the popes. They were compelled to have their priests ordained by outside bishops. Usually the Italian bishops were appealed to and these ordained their priests, but only under the condition that they administer the Sacrament of the Altar under one species. The Bohemian priests having obtained ordination, practically under false pretenses, on their return would solemnly recant this promise and administer the Cup to the laity. The ethics of such practices needs no comment and shows the baneful effects of a superstitious idea of ordination, even when there was an approach to the Gospel in other doctrines.

As early as 1522 Luther had tried to come in contact with this party and in 1523 at the suggestion of one of their number, Gallus Cahera, then resident in Wittenberg, he wrote this treatise. As Luther stated later the importunities and influences of Cahera were largely responsible for its production and the form

¹⁷ For example Bonaventura Sülzfleisch, 1532, and Andreas Trebitz, 1532, note, Enders v. 17, p. 239. Johann Sutel, note, Enders, v. 8, p. 368.

it assumed. Luther had great hopes of enlisting the support of the Bohemians, but, alas, Cahera, from whom such great things were expected, soon after his return repudiated Luther.

In this book Luther urges the Bohemians to give up the evil custom of the past and rather than to seek ordination from falsely teaching bishops they should establish a ministry of their own. Now the extraordinary thing about this document which advocates the most extremely "low" teaching concerning the ministry is that Luther here demands that those who are called to the office be ordained by the laying on of hands. This does not necessarily imply, as it is so often taken, as an ordination conducted by the laity, for the Bohemians had presbyters available, and every natural inference is that Luther had such in mind, as it is certain that the Bohemians with their traditional views of ordination would think of them as the ordainers. The important point, however, is the fact that he insisted on an ordination by those holding the pure faith and one that carried with it an obligation to the true faith, and at the same time protested against accepting an ordination that carried with it an obligation to false doctrine and that was conferred by false teachers. Furthermore he recognizes ordination as having scriptural authority.¹⁸

¹⁸ "Nam cum ista ordinatio autoritate scripturarum, deinde exemplo et decretis Apostolorum in hoc sit instituta, ut ministros verbi in populo institueret: Ministerium publicum inquam verbi, quo dispensantur mysteria dei, per sacram ordinationem instituti debet, ceu res, quae omnium in Ecclesia et summa et maxima est, in qua tota vis Ecclesiastici status consistit, cum sine verbo nihil constet in Ecclesia et per solum verbum omnia constant." W. 12, p. 173.

"Diende cum quilibet sit ad verbi ministerium natus e baptismo, et Episcopi papales nolint dare verbi ministros, nisi tales, qui verbum dei aboleant et Ecclesiam perdant, reliquum est aut permittere Ecclesiam dei perire sine verbo, aut oportere conventu facto communibus suffragiis ex suo gremio eligere unum vel quotquot opus fuerit idoneos, et orationibus ac manum impositionibus universistati commendare et confirmare, atque eos tum pro legitimis Episcopis et ministris verbi agnoscere et colere, indubitata fide credendo, a deo gestum et factum esse, quod hac ratione gesserit et foecerit consensus communis fidelium, Euangelion ag-

The importance of this public attestation was early recognized. When the question was raised as to the qualifications of some ministers in Erfurt and as to whether the true Church of Christ existed in that city, Luther, Melancthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas and Myconius replied, in an opinion of August 22, 1536, that their doctrine had been approved and they had been confirmed and assured "velunt quadam impositione manum."¹⁹

At a much earlier date (if we may be permitted to neglect the strict chronological order for a moment), Luther had seen the true significance of ordination. "In this manner," he says in his book *An den christlichen Adel etc.*, "the Christians in earlier days elected their bishops and priests from among their number, who then were confirmed by other bishops without any of the pomp that now prevails. Thus Augustine, Ambrose and Cyprian became bishops."²⁰

noscentium as profitentium." W. 12, p. 191.

"Tum convocatis et convientibus libere, quorum corda deus tetigerit, ut vobiscum idem sentiant et sapiant, procedatis in nomine domini et eligite quem et quos volueritis, qui digni et idonei visi fuerint, tum impositis super eos manibus illorum, qui potiores inter vos fuerint, confirmetis et commendetis eos populo et Ecclesiae seu universitati, sintque hoc ipso vestri Episcopi, ministri seu pastores, Amen." W. 12, pp. 193-194.

How little it was the intention to deprecate the office of the ministry or deny its necessity is apparent in the introduction of Speratus to his German translation of 1524. "Es sagt aber und leret von dem, da keyn notturfftigers ynn der kyrchen ist, von dem wort und seyнем diener odder verkundiger, on welche die kyrch nicht eyn kyrchen ist, auch nicht eyn kyrchen beleyben mag. Es were denn eyn kyrche der bosshafftigen, davon Gott durch den Prophten sagt: Ich habe sie gehasset; am xxv psalm." W. 12., p. 166.

¹⁹ "Omnes quoque omnium ecclesiarum Christi pastores non modo mediocrium, sed insignium urbium illos pro veris Christi discipulis et ministris agnoscunt, cum eis communicant, eorum doctrinam approbant et velut quadam impositione manuum confirmant et corroborant." Enders, 11, p. 42. Rietschl argues from the *velut quadam* that the imposition of hands was only figurative. That does not alter the fact of a public attestation.

²⁰ "Auff disse weysze erweleten vortzeyten die Christen ausz dem hauffen yhre Bischoff und priester die darnach von andern Bischoffen wurden bestetiget on alles prangen, das itzt regirt; Szo wart sanct Augustin, Ambrosius, Cyprianus Bischoff." W. 6, p. 408.

Without further comment we will give examples showing the growing feeling of the importance of ordination. On April 22, 1539, Geo. von Anhalt wrote to Luther in behalf of Anthonius Oltz: "Because he is not ordained we request that, in case you find him properly qualified for this office, you would be so gracious as to bestow on him *ordinationem cum impositione manum presbyterii* as is customary among you." Enders, 18, p. 31. The answer comes in the ordination certificate of Anton Oeltze, April 27, 1539, "Ideo publica ordinatione in ecclesia nostra commendatum est ei ministerium docendi Euan-geli et administrandi sacramenta, que dominus noster Jesus Christus nobis reliquit et conseruari iusset." Enders, 18, p. 32.

In the same year a belated ordination certificate issued to Wenc. Kilman, who had been ordained a number of years before, signed by Luther and Bugenhagen states: "We therefore confirm the call of this Wenceslaus and by an ecclesiastical ordination we have committed to him the ministry of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, according to his call because it is a divine precept that the Church should examine and ordain ministers of the Gospel."²¹

A similar reference to the scriptural authority for the commissioning of the ministry appears in the German certificates. In that issued to Heinrich Lichtenberg on January 10, 1543, is the form: "Therefore the said Henry Lichtenberg has been publicly ordained in the Church of this place, according to the command of Holy Scripture, and he has been commissioned to preach the Holy Gospel and administer the Holy Sacraments, as he has been called."²²

²¹ "Nos igitur vocationem hujus Wenceslai confirmavimus, et ordinatione ecclesiastica commendavimus ei ministerium docendi evangelii et administrandi sacramenta, juxta vocationem, quia divinitus praeceptum est, ut ecclesiae explorent et ordinent ministros evangelii." Enders, 7, pp. 131.

²² "Derhalben ist bemelter Heinrich Lichtenberg alhie öffentlich nach befehl Göttlicher schrift in der Kirchen Ordiniret, vnd jm befohlen, des heilige Euangelium zu predigen und die heiligen Sacrament, da er beruffen, zu reichen. Enders, 15, pp. 87-88. See also in various of the certificates listed in note 16.

How fully ordination was regarded as the commissioning of the ministry and an attestation of soundness in the faith: not merely as a certificate of scholarly ability or moral character, appears strikingly in the ordination certificate given Theodor Frabicius, August 3, 1544, when we recall that he had already been advanced to the academic degree of Doctor of Theology on May 29 of the same year. "Therefore (because of the known soundness of his faith and because of the call he had received) there is committed to him by a public ordination, according to Apostolic teaching, the ministry of teaching the Gospel and of administering the Sacraments, as instituted by Christ, according to his call."²³

In the same year Luther and Bugenhagen, writing to the Elector on December 16th, ask aid for the support of Bernard Zettler, that he might instruct the candidates for ordination. "It is fitting," they say, "that ordination should not be a mere ceremony but rather that it should be a serious proclamation of doctrine and an instruction, as many have acknowledged that they have been reminded in a salutary way by such action."²⁴

So ordination became an established order in the Church and henceforth the only questions raised during Luther's lifetime, were concerning various details involved in its administration. It is taken for granted, and only seven days before his death we find him replying to a series of questions addressed to him by George of Anhalt, on this subject, with explicit di-

²³ "Quare ei iuxta doctrinam Apostolicam publica ordinatione commendatum est ministerium docendi Evangelii et Sacramenta a Christo instituta administrandi iuxta vocationem." Enders 16, p. 63.

²⁴ "So soll billich die ordinatio nicht allein ein Ceremonia sein, sondern ehs soll dabey ein ernstliche erkundung sein der lehre vnd ein vnterricht, wie vns denn viel bekennen, das sie durch solch vnterweisen nutzlich erinnert werden." Enders, 16, p. 127.

rections concerning various practical considerations that needed to be settled.²⁸

One thing, already touched on in the advice given the Bohemians, is explicitly mentioned on occasion, as well as being implied in the doctrinal requirements of the ordination certificates, and that is *that ordination is not to be sought from those who persecute the Church or who teach false doctrine*. If the bishops will not ordain without an obligation to false teaching then ordination is not to be dispensed with but is to be received from others. The context in the following statement makes it clear that the presbyters are meant.

Some time in the beginning of July, 1530, Luther, then at the Coburg, wrote an opinion concerning certain articles that had been submitted to him. Among them was this:

"The Fourth Article concerning Ordination or Consecration.

²⁸ As a matter of interest we give some of the questions and answers. Of the 48 questions we quote only those relating to ordination. "2. Quomodo examinandi sint ordinandi ad ministerium, et si extet certa forma et ratio, vt fiat eius alijs communicatio et copia.

"Petatur vel a nostris, si non est alia.

"3. Vtrum ordinatio ministrorum tantum in Ecclesia Cathedrali et statis temporibus celebranda sit, et cuiusmodi ceremoniae sint adhibendae.

"Sicut nos facimus, ita consulimus nulli praeiudicantes.

"And debeant adesse in ordinatione alij superattendentes, ad quorum iurisdictionem ordinandi pertinent.

"Non, set (sed) sufficit testimonium.

"4. Quale debeat esse testimonium ordinandorum, vt ei fides habeatur cet.

"Ecclesiae vel Magistratus, vnde mittuntur.

"5. Item si Bohemi aut peregrinae nationis homines petant ordinationem cet.

"Concedantur.

"Item de dimissorijs et formatis.

"Danda sunt.

"6. Vtrum ordinatus in Presbyterum denuo in Episcopum ordinandus sit ad hoc officium vocatus.

"Sufficiet oratio Ecclesia et impositio manum.

"An per saltum possint ministri verbi ordinari.

"Nisi ratio subsit, licet." Enders, 17. p. 37 seq.

"In these matters the best means of attaining unity will be for the bishops to omit the oaths and obligations by which they bind the ordinands to an ungodly teaching and an unmarried life, for then they will be able to retain their dignities and authority and at the same time would secure a sufficient number of priests. But if they will not yield, they will have to fall and be ruined. For nowadays those persons who are well informed and clever do not want to burden themselves with such oaths, dangers and godless teaching. The final result will be that consecration and ordination will no more be sought from the bishops, but will be sought elsewhere as may be most fitting."²⁶

More emphatic still is the statement found in the ordination certificate of Wenceslaus Kilman, 1539, which has already been quoted. After the reference to the Council of Nicea and its direction concerning ordination by neighboring bishops, there is added this statement: "Neither, indeed, is ordination to be sought from others who persecute the Gospel of Christ, who are to be shunned as anathema, as Paul says, if any teach another Gospel, let him be anathema."²⁷

That Luther was not alone in his opinions but reflected the teaching of the Church becomes evident if we give only a few of the expressions of opinion found in the writing of contemporaries or in those of the men of the succeeding generation.

²⁶ "Der viert Artikel vom Ordiniren oder Weißen.

"Nicht besser Mittel zur Einigkeit mag in diesen Sachen sein, dann dass die Bischöfe nachlassen die Eid und Pflicht, damit sie die Ordinandten verbinden zur gottlosen Lehre und zum Leben ahn Ehe; denn so bleiben sie wohl in ihrer Würde und Regiment, und kriegten Priester gnug. Wo sie aber nicht nachlassen, so müssen sie fallen und zu Grund gehen. Denn was itzt gelehret und geschickt Gesellen sind, die wollen sich nicht mit solchen Eiden, Fahr und gottloser Lehre beladen. Und wird zuletzt dahin kommen dass man das Weißen und Ordiniren auch nicht mehr von den Bischöfen, sondern wie sichs sonst gebührt, holen und empfangen wird." Enders, 8, p. 75.

²⁷ "Nec vero petenda ordinatio ab ullis, qui persequuntur evangelium Christi qui sunt vitandi tanquam anathema, sicut Paulus dicit, is quis aliud evangelium docuerit, anathema sit." Enders 7, pp. 131-132.

IV. Opinions of the Lesser Reformers concerning Ordination.

Naturally our first thought is of Melanchthon. In an opinion of the year 1551, written to the university of Griefswald, he defines ordination as the complete act that includes the election, the examination, and the public certification and prayers of the Church. This should be a public rite and its use is very necessary both for the Church and the ordinand. To all this Bugenhagen assents. In 1555 in the opinion occasioned by the controversy of Frederus, to which reference will be made later, and which opinion was also signed by Major, Melanchthon adds as parts of ordination that must necessarily be retained and are of divine right, the vocation, examination, publication of approval and prayers.²⁸

What men generally were thinking about this question is clearly shown by some of the documents of an earlier day. We take two of the proposals submitted for the consideration of the evangelical party before the adoption of the Augsburg Confession, both belonging to the early part of the year 1530. One is a confession of the City of Reutlingen, in which Art. 19 treats of the ordering or consecrating of priests. The statement is so clear and in such full accord with Luther's view that we will quote part of it: "It is evident from Holy Scripture, that

²⁸ "Haec vocatio complectans ipsam personae nominationem seu electionem, doctrinae inspectionem, testificationem apud Ecclesiam et precationem est reipsa ordinatio, quam Deus vult per homines in Ecclesia fieri.—— Et pie fecit Lutherus, qui ad veram Ecclesiam transtulit non solum vocationem, sed etiam hanc publicam testificationem, quae fit publico ritu, quia certe inspectio doctrinae per ministros Evangelii facienda est. Et honestum est aliquo publico ritu fieri inchoationem ministerii et precationem. Et multae sunt piae et graves causae retinendi hunc publicum ritum, prodest Ecclesiis videre, qui a quibus testimonium doctrinae habeant, prodest ipsis vocatis, illustria signa suae vocationis habere, ut minus crucientur hac tentatione." To this Bugenhagen adds: "Tuam hanc sententiam de ordinatione nostra toto corde amplector." Quoted in Rietschl's *Luther und die Ordination*, 1883, p. 76. The opinion of 1555 reads, "Necessaria et juris divini et retinenda sunt, vocatio, examen, publicatio approbationis, precatio." Corp. Ref. VIII. p. 597.

all true Christians become spiritual priests in Baptism through Christ the Son of God, and that they shall offer spiritual sacrifices. It is also evident that Christ has instituted ministers in His Church, who shall publish His Gospel and administer His Sacraments. Neither should each one, though he is a spiritual priest, be allowed to assume or exercise the common, public ministry of the Church without an orderly call. For Paul says, I Cor. 14:10, 'Let all things be done decently and in order', and again, I Tim. 5:22, 'Lay hands suddenly on no man.'" For the sake of good order they are even ready to retain several grades of the ministry.²⁰

The other is the proposal of Caspar Löner, who once had accompanied Luther part way on his journey to the Diet of Augsburg, and who suffered persecution for his participation in the Reformation. We will give the text complete in the footnote. All that we will reproduce here is his account of the ordination of Nik. Medlar, Luther's friend, who later assisted in the consecration of Nicholas von Amsdorf, and who still later opposed the introduction of the Interim into Brunswick. This ordination is important because it took place on St. Stephen's day, 1529, before ordination was regularly practiced in Witten-

²⁰ "Es ist aus heiliger schrift kundbar, dass alle warhaftige christen im tauf durch Christum, den son Gottes geweiht werden zu geistlichen priestern und sollen geistliche opfer opfern. Es ist auch offenbar, dass Christus in seiner kirchen eingesetzt hat diener, die sein evangelion verkünden und seine sacramenten austheilen sollen. Man solle auch nit einem ieden gestatten, er seie also ein gaistlicher priester als er welle, dass er sich des gemainen, offentlichen kurchendients on ordentlichen beruf in der gemain underneme und geprauche. Dann Paulus sagt I Cor. 14.10; 'Alle ding sollen under euch erbarlich und ordenlich zugehen,' und abermals I Tim. 5, 22: 'Lege neimands bald die hend auf.'

"Darumb erachten, wir dass es nutz und gut sei, dass der glaub und trauen deren, die zum gemeinen offentlichen dienst des evangelii treten und kommen wellen, vorhin durch etliche staffel und grad der empter beweret und erkündigt weren, und dass man unter den dienern der kirchen ire ordnungen halte. Das dienet unsers erachtens etwas zur einigkeit und furderet sie." Wilhelm Gussmann, *Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte des Augsburgischen Glaubensbekenntnisses*, 1911, I, 2, pp. 254-255.

berg. Löner describes it thus: "According to this christian and apostolic order and after the example of several christian congregations of our own times, and perceiving the great need of our congregation, I brot to their attention a man of Christian character and versed in the Holy Scriptures. Upon their election and with the appointed Superintendent on the hills, I committed to him, as my assistant in word and counsel, the preaching office and ministry of the Church, without any pomp, display, vows or similar performances but with the laying on of hands."³⁰

³⁰ "Von der weihe der Kirchdiener.

"Und ist auch hieraus klar, dass briester ordnen nicht ein sacrament sei, noch den bischophen allein und babst zustehe, sonder on alle pomp ein bevelche, den von einer gemeine wegen der diener am wort einem glaubigen thue nach der wal der gemein, gleich als, wen man ein ampman ausruft und in bevilet einer das ambt von einer gemain wegen, gilt die apostelische ordnung. Nach der ordnung welen und weihen die in ihren geschikten aposteln, Matthiam, Act 1, 21 ff und die diacon Act 6, 6. Darzu so predigt s. Stefan, der diacon, sunder alle ordination. Item Apollo, der hochberumbt apostel, on allen beruf und ordnung kumbt gen Epheso und predigt Act. 18, 24 ff.

Dass aber die kirch oder gemein zu welen und zu ordnen und zu bestetigen hab ire diener, beweist s. Cyprian aus heiliger, gotlicher schrift in der ep. 4, zu dem brister Felicem geschriben, also: 'Ein volk, das Gott furcht, soll abgesondert werden von einem gottlosen prelaten und mit seim gotsdiebischen opfer sich nicht verunreinigen, dieweil es gut macht und recht hat, wirdige brister zu erwelen und unwirdige zu wegern. Welchs wir dann sechen, dass von gotlicher achparkeit kumen sei, dass ein briester in beiwesen des volks in aller augen erwelet, duchtig oder untuchtig offentlich erkant und beweret werd.', wie Num. 22, 2 ff gepeut der herr, Aaron und seine sone zu welen. Das weisen auch aus s. Augustini, Ambrosius und Cypriani wal und weihe, die von einer gemaine gewalt und durch die bischop in der stadt und umbher bestetigt sind.

"Und dieser christlichen und apostolischen ordnung nach und auch dem exempel etlicher christlichen gemeinen zu unsern zeiten hab ich nach erkantnus der grossen not unser gemeine hie einen christlichen und in gotlicher schrift erfahrenen man der gemeine hie angezeigt und auf ir wal, auch e. f. g. verordenten superatendenten aufm gebirg, als meiner mitdiener am wort, rat und stim das predigambt und kirchendienst bevolhen on allen pomp, gebreng, gelubd oder anders mit auflegung der hende. Welcher auch seer duglich darzu noch erfunden wirt und einer christlichen gemein hie ser treulich dienet, welchs sie auch bezeugen soll und wird." Gussmann, *Quellen etc.* I, 2, pp. 109-110.

The "Superatendenten auf dem gebirg" is Johann Schnabel, pastor in Kulmbach.

There is a particular interest attached to the utterances of Erasmus Sarcerius. Himself a Gnesio Lutheran, he played no mean role among the lesser men of the Reformation. An appreciative account of his life is to be found in the *Prot. Realencyclopedie*, v. 17, pp. 482-486, where Kawerau includes this significant bit of information concerning his position towards ordination: "He, who had himself first entered the ministerial office without ordination, now admonished all those who had passed through the same experience that they should follow his example, for later he had himself ordained with the laying on of hands." p. 485. It was not a superstitious motive that prompted him but a recognition of the need of good order and the importance of observing apostolic usage. Among his published works is "*Von Christlichen nötigen/ und nützen Consistorien oder Geistlichen Gerichten/ Erasmi Sarcerij einfaltiges bedenken/ aufforderung. etc. Eisleben des jars 1555.*" In the course of his discussion he makes this reference to ordination:

"Secondly, The consistories have been founded for the ordination of the ministry. Because of the excellence and dignity of the office of the ministry ordination should be conducted with all impressiveness and it is not fitting that every pastor should ordain. In case of necessity, of course, it is another matter, as when in olden time in Egypt, the presbyters held the ordinations during the absence of the bishops. This has also frequently happened among us at the beginning of the evangelical reformation. And since a dignified examination belongs to ordination and many other things as we shall hear later, therefore it is fitting that the ordination of the ministers should be performed by the Consistories where those are present who understand such matters. But if the Consistories are too far removed and the Superintendents have learned men associated with them, the priestly ordination may also be delegated to them. Now it is not so important who ordains provided the or-

dination is held as will be described later. No one, however, should be permitted to push himself into church offices who is uncalled, unexamined or unordained. For Holy Scripture likewise confirms an orderly call and condemns a disorderly one. So the Apostels used the laying on of hands as a sign of the ordination and confirmation of the ministry as the accounts of their activities show. So the Council of Nice, held soon after the Apostels' times, decrees that the Church shall elect and the Bishop shall be brought to the election. And this doctrine of ordination belongs to the article of the Christian faith, I believe one Holy and universal Church."³¹

Another interesting testimony from the same generation as to the importance attached to ordination comes from George III, prince of Anhalt, whose theology was that of Luther and whose deep devotion and blameless life won for him the title

³¹ "Zum andern/ so sein die Consitoria ein gesetzt/ von wegen der Ordination der Kirchendiener. Denn man von wegen der hoheit und würdigkeit des Kirchenampts/ die Ordination statlich halten sol/ und nicht einen jeden Pastor oder Pfarrherrn zu ordeniren gestatten. Wie wol es in der not ein ander ding ist/ wie dan auch fur seiten die Presbyteri in abwesen der Bischoffe/ in Egypten ordinieret haben. Vnd ist solchs auch bey vnsern zeiten/ in anfang des Evangelij offt geschehen. Vnd dieweil denn auch ein statlich Examen zur Ordination gehört/ und andere nötige dinge mehr/ wie hernach zu hören/ Darumb ist es billich/ das die Ordination der Kirchen diener von den Consistorijs geschehe/ da man dan Leute hat/ so diese ding recht verwalten können. Doch wo die Consistoria etwa zu ferne entlegen/ vnd die Superintendenten neben sich Gelerte haben/ mag auch jnen die Priesterliche Ordination befohlen und Zugelassen werden. Nu ist nicht so viel daran gelegen wer da ordinire/ wenn allein die Ordination gehalten/ wie folgen wird. Man sol aber in keinen wege gestatten/ das Vnberuffene/ vneurhörte/ und vnordinirte/ sich selbs in Kirmenempter (sic) ein dringen.

Denn auch die Schrift den ordentlichen beruff besetigt/ vnd den vnordentlichen oder das eindringen verdammet. So haben auch die Apostel (wie in jren Geschichten zusehen) zum zeichen der Ordination/ vnd confirmation der Kirchen diener/ das handaufflegen gebrauchet. Item/ so spricht das Concilium Nicenum/ balde nach der Apostel zeiten gehalten. Das die Kirche welen sol/ vnd der Bischoff zur wahl gezogen werden. Vnd gehört diese lere von der Ordination/ in den Artickel Christlichs Glauben. Ich glaube eine Heilige vnd gemeine Kirche."

of "the pious." Appointed to be "spiritual coadjutor" of the bishopric of Merseburg he desired to receive episcopal consecration to stop the mouths of Romanists. Unable to receive it he was publicly confirmed in his office by Luther. Attacked by the papists in this account he published a defence and justification of the transaction. A generation later in 1579 this was published anew by Nicholas Selnecker, who added an *Epistola Dedicatoria*.³² In this treatise Geo. of Anhalt expresses his gratitude to God that in the Church ordination was observed according to Apostolic usage with all its essential and necessary parts, namely, "Vocation, examination, public confirmation or initiation, in which, by the laying on of the hands of all the clergy there was committed to the one called the preaching of the divine Word and the administration of the Sacraments." That in case of need it is perfectly right for Presbyters to ordain he argues from the analogy of lay baptism. His own ordination he defends because it is the work of Jesus Christ speaking through the mouth of His ministers, and administering through their hands, as in the absolution and the ministration of the Sacraments. "Thus through the Church He calls ministers, and by His Word, through the mouth and hand of the Presbyters ordains and confirms, and anoints with His Holy Spirit, according to His promise: 'Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.'" There is no limitation by divine law of ordination to the episcopacy. "But it consists of the vocation, which should be through the Church, and the confirmation, which should be through the Word of

³² *De Ordinatione Ministrorum Ecclesiae et Refutatio Falsarum Objectionum, quibus Papistae (& imprimis hodie Apostata Francus Ioachimicus) oppugnant Ordinationem in Ecclesijs repurgatis harum regionum.* The main title of Selnecker's edition is, "*De Ritv Ordinationis usitatae in Ecclesijs prioribus, confessioni Augustanae addictis.*"

God, prayers, and the laying on of the hands of the entire ministry.”³³

More than 25 years later Selnecker is still of the same opinion and evidently regards the famous passage in the Smalkald Articles as a defence of the right of ministers to ordain, even when not bishops, as is seen in the following words found in his *Epistola Dedicatoria* to the previously quoted book: “Concerning what pertains to the right of calling we teach that the Church in every place, the spouse of our Lord Jesus Christ, has the power, by the common consent of the regular magistracy, the people and the ministry of the Church, of calling those suitable for the office of the ministry, who have the witness of

³³ Contra vero nos DEO gratias agere, in infoque gloriari possumus & debemus, quod (laus DEO) in his Ecclesijs consuetudo Apostolica cum omnibus substantialibus & necessarijs partibus in Ministrorum ordinatione obferre, qualia sunt, Vocatio, examen, confirmatio seu initiatio publica, in qua Vocatis a toto Clero per manum impositionem, praedicatio verbi diuini & Sacramentorum administratio commendantur.” pp. 11-12.

“Quod si mulierculis in casu necessitatis Baptismum administrare licet, qui quidem efficax est propter ipsum CHRISTVM baptizantem, Cur non Ecclesiae cum suis Presbyteris, maxime in extrema necessitate, cum videlicet verbi & Sacramentorum Ministris vocandis, & per Verbum, orationem & manuum impositionem confirmandis, dum Titulares illi & solo nomine Episcopi, officium suum, vel simpliciter, vel certe iuxta CHRISTI & Apostolorum institutionem facere recusant?” *ibid.* p. 18.

“Talis ordinatio (His own as a bishop by presbyters) & demandata simul Sacramentorum administratio quomodo erit inanis & irrita? In qua DEI Filius DOMINUS noster IESVS CHRISTUS Archiepiscopus anunarum nostrarum praefens adest, & sicut per ora & manus Ministrorum loquitur, absoluit, baptizat, Corpus Sanguinemque, suum distribuit: Ita per Ecclesiam ministros vocat, & verbo suo per ora & manus Presbyterorum ordinat atque confirmat, Spirituque suo sancto vngit, iuxta promissionem. Vbi sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum. Et quomodo non erit praefens & efficax ibi maxime, vbi vera precatione fideles Ministri petuntur, — iuxta verbum eius sistuntur atque confirmantur?” *ibid.* pp. 19-20.

“Hinc manifestum est ac perspicuum, quod ordinatio seu potestas creandi Religiosos iure diuino nequaquam solis Episcopis attributa sit, quasi Episcopo absente non possit ordinatio fieri: Sed quod ea consistat in vocatione, quae fit per Ecclesiam, & confirmatione, quae fit per Verbum DEI precationes, & manuum impositionem vniuersi Cleri.” *ibid.* p. 23.

honest doctrine, of learning, and of personal piety. Such are heard in the examination and are scrutinized as to their progress and proficiency in divine teaching by the Superintendent, and by other ministers and pastors, and prayers are offered in the Church, the hands are imposed and everything is done according to apostolic rite and custom, without idolatrous unction or superstition. And that in this manner it was appointed by the Holy Spirit to ordain to the office of teaching and of administering the Sacraments, Paul himself bears witness. Acts 20.”³⁴

We will add just one more expression of opinion from one of the lesser known writers of early date. Matthesius, in his *Predigten von den Historien unsers Herrn Jesus Christi*, Nürnberg, 1579, fol. 111. (Quoted in Kliefoth, *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, vol. 1, p. 414-415), says, “During such acts and prayers of the Church the Son of God has always been and still is present, for He sends laborers into His vineyard, and has ascended into heaven, that He might give gifts and fill the (Office of the ministry in the) churches, though now He does so mediate through the Elders and appointed Superintendents, and as He evidently anointed His prophets and apostels with the true unction of His Spirit and invested them with honor and power from on high, so he is ever efficacious in this His order and in the power of the keys; in holy ordination. St. Paul clearly testifies, I Tim. 4, 14, and II Tim. 1, 6, that Timothy

³⁴ “Quod attinet ad ius vocandi, docemus, Ecclesiam vniuscuiusque loci, sponfam Domini nostri Jesu Christi, habere potestatem, vnamini consensu magistratus ordinarij, communionis, & ministrorum Ecclesiae, vocandi idoneos ad officia ministerij, qui testimonium habeant doctrinae sincerae, eruditionis, & pietatis vitae. Tales audiuntur in examine, & exploratur ipsorum profectus & dexteritas in doctrina coelesti, a Superintendente, vt vocant, & caeteris ministris & Pastoribus, & fiunt preces in Ecclesia, imponuntur manus, & peraguntur omnia & singula more & ritu Apostolico, sine idolatrica vnctione, & superstitione. Et tales a Spiritu Sancto ordinari, & officio docendi & Sacramenta administrandi, praefici, testatur, ipse Paulus, Actor. 20.” a5 (2 seq).

had received the gift of the Holy Ghost in his ordination, and admonishes him to give heed thereto and to stir up that gift by prayer, meditation and exercise, since God had given to him and to Timothy the spirit of power, love and purity.—This we call apostolic or christian ordination, which the Church of God, through the power of the keys, has the ability to impart.—Such apostolic ordination, indeed, every pastor should have if he is to accomplish good and be blessed in his office; for we see that the Lord Jesus is powerful in His Word and order, and hears the prayer of believers and bestows His Spirit and gifts on the ordinand through the laying on of hands. Therefore christian ordination is not to be despised.”²⁵

V. References to Ordination in the Church Orders.

Forms of ordination and reference to the rite are found in the Church Orders in large number. Luther's published form for ordination of 1537 passed into the Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttler KO of 1538; Hildesheim, 1548; Mecklenburg, 1552, and into *Einer Christlichen Ordination/ form und weise/ und was*

²⁵ “Bei solchen Acte und Gebete der Kirchen ist der Sohn Gottes allwege gewesen und noch, denn er sendet Arbeiter in seinen Weinberg, und ist darum gen Himmel gefahren, dass er Gaben austheile, und die Kirchen, wiewohl jetzund *mediate* durch die Aeltesten und verordneten Superintendenten bestelle, und wie er seine Propheten und Apostel sichtlich mit dem rechten Balsam seines Geistes salbet und investirt sie mit Ehre und Kraft aus der Höhe, also ist es allzeit kräftig bei dieser seiner Ordnung und Schlüsselgewalt, bei der heiligen Ordination. Denn St. Paulus zeuget deutlich I Tim. 4, 14 und II Tim. 1, 6., dass Thimotheus die Gabe des heiligen Geistes in seiner Ordination bekommen habe, und heiffet ihn darauf Acht geben, und dieselbige mit Beten, Studiren, Arbeiten erwecken, denn Gott habe ihm und Thimotheo den Geist der Kraft, Lieb und Zucht gegeben.—Das nennen wir nun die apostolische oder christliche Ordination, welche die Kirche Gottes in Kraft der Schlüssel Macht hat zu geben.—Solche apostolische Ordination, traun, soll nun ein jeder Kirchendiener haben, will er anders in seinem Amt seliglich laufen und was Gutes ausrichten; denn wir sehen daff der Herr Jesus kräftig ist bei seinem Wort und Ordnung, und erhöret das Gebet der Gläubigen und theilet den Ordinanden durch Auflegung der Hände seinen geist und Gaben aus. Darum soll man christliche Ordination nicht verachten.”

dazu gehörig. Durch Erasmus Sarcerium, etc. 1554. A few of the statements found in the Church Orders are of special interest in showing the estimate placed on the importance of ordination. No where do we find the deprecation of the rite shown by certain later theorists, except in certain abnormal developments in Wuerttemberg.

The visitation commission of Henry of Saxony reported on October 11, 1540: "First of all the vacant parishes should be regularly filled with honest and capable men, and when parishes become vacant the collators shall not bestow any parish except to one who has first been examined by the superintendent of the district to which the parish belongs, and, in case he was not before in the ministry of the Gospel, after he has been ordained to the office by the preachers in Leipzig."³⁶

The KO of Joachim II of Brandenburg, 1540, expressly demands, "If anyone be called to the office of the ministry and is not yet ordained he shall receive ordination in the proper manner, before he undertake the office to which he has been called." There is also a further provision that if the bishops refuse to bestow ordination it may be given by priests, but is to be restricted to the Superintendents and those authorized to do so.³⁷

The instruction given for the Visitation in Albertinian Saxony, March 3, 1555, directs, "Besides our appointed visitors, in every place where they may receive reports from the ministers, they shall question them concerning their call and ordination, and they shall direct the officials, the liege lords,

³⁶ Erstlich sollen die pfarren mit rechtschaffenen und geschickten mennern ordentlich bestellt werden, und so sich die pfarren verledigen, sollen die collatores keinem die pfarr leihen, er sei denn von dem superattendenten des kreises, darin die pfarr gelegen, zuvor verhört, examiniert und so er zuvor im dienst des evangelii nicht gewesen, durch die predicanten, zu Leipzig zu solchen ampt ordiniret." Sehling, *Kirchenordnungen*, vol. I, p. 284.

³⁷ "Ob auch jemand zum kirchenamt berufen und noch nicht ordiniret were, derselbige sol gebürlicher weise ordinationem empfangen, eher er sich des berufenen amts unterwinde." Sehling, vol. III, p. 85.

the pastors and the people, that no one shall venture to preach who has not been regularly called, and that they shall not receive anyone to the pastoral office who has not been commissioned with a public ordination and testimony, and since such ordination is of great importance, when it is conscientiously conducted, after a preceding examination, they shall provide proper support for the one who has been called to the pastorate and whom they send for ordination, so that he may be able to await it at the appointed place.”³⁸

Herzogt, Pommern, 1569, provides that unordained preachers were to be punished by the authorities (Sehling, vol. IV, p. 421).

The KO of Albertinian Saxony, 1580, has a form of ordination with the laying on of hands and uses these words: “So ordne, confirmire und bestetige ich dich, aus gottlichen befehl und ordnung, zu einem diener und seelsorger dieser gemein, etc.” (Sehling, vol. I, p. 418 seq.).

VI. The Historical Beginnings of Evangelical Ordination and the controversies concerning its Necessity.

The earliest usage concerning ordination is shrouded in some obscurity. Apparently the first evangelical ordination was that of Geo. Rörer, who was set apart for the ministry, with the laying on of hands, by Luther, May 14, 1525. Presently, as the evangelical cause made more rapid progress, and when previously ordained priests were no longer to be had in large numbers, while the demand for pastors was constantly

³⁸ Daneben sollen auch unsere verordente visitatores eines idern orts da sie der kirchendiener halben erkundigung nehmen werden, dieselben von irem beruf und ordination befragen, und den apmtleuten, lehnhern, der pfarren und communen bevehlen, das sie niemand zu predigen verstadten, der nicht darzu ordentlich berufen ist, das sie auch keinen zum pfarramt annehmen, der nicht mit offentlicher ordination und testimonio darzu bestetigt ist, und weil an solcher ordination, das diesselbe mit vleis und auf vorgehende examination geschehe, viel gelegen, sollen die jenigen, so einer kirchendeiner berufen und zu der ordination schicken werden, derselben mit zehrung also versehen, das er derer an der geordenten orden abwarten kann.” Sehling, vol. I, p. 307.

increasing, the question became acute. At first there seems to have been an inclination to regard ordination as unessential and unimportant but two factors helped to compel its recognition and regular observance. One was the danger from unqualified, uncredited, unprincipled and unorthodox agents of the anabaptists, the "schleicher," who tried to sneak their way into the congregations and imperiled the cause of the Gospel. The flood of false teachers compelled the proper commissioning of true teachers. Public ordination carrying with it the stamp of the approval of the Church and testifying as to the doctrinal soundness of the pastor was needed to protect the congregations from the ravages of false prophets.

The second reason originated in the conscience of the candidates themselves. There was a popular demand on their part that they be ordained according to the customary order of the Church and in conformity to apostolic usage. Men were not ready to go into the work of the ministry without the official sanction, appointment, confirmation and blessing of the whole Church, imparted through its representatives.³⁹

Not until ordination was regularly established did the great stream of candidates for the gospel ministry begin to flow with a full and steady tide. The first step in this direction came from a layman, when in 1535 the Elector enjoined ordination for the Saxon clergy. From that time onward great numbers of candidates were ordained in Wittenberg. Almost weekly ordinations took place with Luther or Bugenhagen, usually the latter, as the ordainers.⁴⁰

³⁹ For example the case of Johannes Sutel of Gottingen with Luther's letter of March 1, 1531. Enders, v. 8, p. 367.

⁴⁰ For this period see, Paul Drews, *Die Ordination, Prüfung und Lehrverpflichtung der Ordinandten in Wittenberg*, 1535. Giessen, 1904. and also the same author's introduction to Luther's Ordination Formula in the Weimar edition of Luther's Works, v. 38, pp. 401 seq. One criticism that must be made concerning some of the modern German treatises on this subject is that, with all their attempt to be strictly objective they convey the impression of trying to interpret the facts in such a way as to make them fit into the abominable "übertragungslehre" invented by Höfling.

Lax ideas concerning ordination, however, persisted in some quarters and finally broke out in a controversy concerning Johannes Frederus, which was waged between Aepinus of Hamburg and the Pommeranian Generalsuperintendent Knipstroh. It is unnecessary to follow the whole controversy into its various complexities, involving as they do at various times political questions and the claims of conflicting ecclesiastical and civil jurisdictions. Full accounts can be found in Walch's *Streitigkeiten*, Mohnike, *Frederus Leben*, Kliefoth's *Liturgische Abhandlungen*, Rietschel's *Luther und die Ordination* and Grützmaker, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Ordination*, *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, May, 1912. For our purpose it is sufficient to consider the beginning and ending of the whole dispute.

Frederus had been called to be "Lector Secundarius" at the cathedral in Hamburg in 1540. As such he was to preach but not to perform any ministerial acts. He was not ordained because the cathedral chapter was still Romish. Seven years later he was called to become "Stadtssuperintendent" in Stralsund in Pommerania. The Pommeranian Generalsuperintendent Knipstroh at once demanded that he be ordained. He would probably have agreed but local pride objected. Aepinus advised him to continue in his office and he not only did so but even began to ordain others, so that one who had never been formally appointed a representative of the Church for such purposes began to assume functions which had never been delegated to him by the Church. For other reasons Frederus was removed from his office in 1549 and he then accepted a professorship in Greifswald. A year later, in 1550, the Duke of Pommern, called him to become Superintendent of Rügen, which from ancient times had been under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Bishops of Roeskilde in Denmark. The then bishop, Palladius, himself an evangelical, was not consulted, but after the induction

of Frederus into office was asked to confirm him in that position. The bishop insisted that Frederus should receive confirmation in his office and ordination from the Bishop of Roeskilde personally. This the Duke of Pommern, who was trying to annex the ecclesiastical rights, refused to permit. Again the unordained Frederus began ordaining others, though some of the candidates refused to be ordained by him. The strife waxed hot and Frederus soon tried to make a virtue of his misfortunes. So he refused to be ordained in Wittenberg; a suggestion made by the Duke and the Wittenberg Faculty as an easy way of quieting the controversy that was now going on about his case between Aepinus and Knipstroh. Finally the Duke removed him from his offices and now Frederus refused to recognize the deposition because Rügen belonged to the jurisdiction of Bishop Palladius! At length, in 1551, with wonderful inconsistency, he went to Roeskilde, was confirmed in his office and ordained by the Bishop, a move which neither improved his own position nor allayed the controversy, which had now become a dogmatic question. Not only was the doctrinal side obscured by the political complications but a false turn had been given the whole question by Frederus who had tried to restrict ordination to the single rite of the laying on of hands, with the conclusion that it was an adiaphoron. Knipstroh, on the other hand, correctly insisted that the whole action must be considered together and so considered it was not an adiaphoron. The Duke sent the writing of Knipstroh and Frederus to the Wittenberg Faculty which approved the opinions of Knipstroh in all points, and which was the basis of the decisions of the Synod of Greifswald in 1556.

The fallacy of Frederus was pointed out in a letter written by Melanchthon and Major on November 1, 1555 (Cor. Ref. VII, p. 597 seq.) where they say: "Joh Frederus writes that the

imposition of hands was necessary in the Levitical priesthood, but now it is indeed an adiaphoron, and should be omitted lest the Adiaphorists be encouraged. Others think that the vocation, examination, publication of approval and prayers are necessary things and ought not to be omitted.— It is perfectly true that the gesture of the laying on of hands is not itself a necessary thing, just as formerly in this rite there was the gesture of laying the book of the Gospels on the head of the one who was ordained, but the cunning is not to be approved which by this pretext would remove the entire custom of examination, approval and prayer because this gesture is not necessary.”⁴¹

In the same letter after making it clear that this opinion was not to be construed as retroactive in relation to those who had already been admitted to the Holy Office, he continues, “But since we now have oversight in our Church, no one is to be admitted without examination and public approbation. And it is fitting that this be done by the rite, which was the apostolic custom, followed in the ancient Church.”⁴²

The opinion of the Wittenberg Faculty is, in part, as follows: “As far as doctrine is concerned we find that Magister John Frederus is guilty of the following sophistry. When Dr.

⁴¹ “Joannes Frederus scripsit: impositionem manum in sacerdotio Levitico necessariam fuisse; nunc vero esse 'adiaphoron' et emittendam, ne confirmarentur Adiaphoristae. Alii sentiunt vocationem, examen, publicationem approbationis, et precationem, res necessarias et non omittendas. — Illud verum esse, quod hic ipse gestus impositionis manuum sit res non necessaria, sicut olim in eo ritu hic gestus fuit, librum Evangelii imponere capiti ejus qui ordinabatur; sed astutia non est probanda, quod hoc praetextu totus mos examinis et approbationis et precationis tollitur, quia hic gestus non sit necessarius.”

⁴² “Sed cum Ecclesiae vestrae jam habeant inspectionem, deinceps nulles admittatur sine examine et publica approbatione. Et hanc fieri decet usitato ritu, qui etiam fuit usitatus Apostolis deinceps veteri Ecclesiae.”

Knipstroh contends for this important matter, that the disorder should not be strengthened nor approved that men should enter the regular ministry without a call, without examination, without the publication and approval of the call, speaking especially of the Church Order in Pommerania, where the ordination of priests is the Christian usage, then Frederus snatches a fragment from the whole, the laying on of hands, which is a ceremony and not essential in itself. But he also uses the fallacy of division, and punctures the Church Order with this pretext: Because this ceremony of the laying on of hands is not essential, therefore anyone may occupy the regular ministry in the Church, whether he be examined or not, approved or not, and, in fine, the Pommeranian Church Order should be a *Laqueus conscientiae*, which makes unessential things essential.

——— Since Frederus uses this false conclusion in a dangerous way, we declare that this sophistry is false and that it is not right to throw the essential and the unessential into one basket through such a delusion, to destroy good order and to encourage the disorder that unproven people, sneaks, and turbulent fanatics occupy the regular ministry in the Church. And since the laying on of hands, while not essential in itself, nevertheless has been established in the Churches and particularly in Pommerania, as a proclamation and approval of the call, which requires an external ceremony, Magister Frederus should not call this a *Laqueum conscientiae*, nor incite others to despise this common custom, in which there is neither abuse nor misunderstanding and which has been in the Churches since the beginning of the world. — He knows well enough himself that the chief contention and controversy is not about the single act of laying on of hands, but as to whether this disorder is to be tolerated that unknown sneaks, turbulent fellows or other untried persons may arise in the Pastoral Office through this

manufactured, sophistical pretext that our Order is a *Laqueus conscientiae*.”⁴⁸

The Synod which assembled in Greifswald, February 6, 1556, made its classic decision in the same spirit. As it determined the practice of the Church in large measure during the following centuries we must give it in some detail.

“Therefore the Synod confesses that the ordination of priests, which takes place according to our Pommeranian Church Order with prayer and the laying on of hands is Christian, good and wholesome, and that it is necessary to maintain it in these

⁴⁸ “Sie viel nun die Lehre belanget, so finden wir, daff gedachter Magister Johann Frederus diese Sophisterey brauchet. So Doktor Knipstro dieses Hauptstück streitet, daff man nicht diese Unordnung billigen und stärcken soll, daff man wolt in das ordentliche Ministerium treten ohne Beruff, ohn Examen, ohne Publikation und Approbation des Beruffs und redet fürnemlich von der Kirchen-Ordnung in Pommern, da die Ordinatio der Priester im Christlichen Gebrauch ist: So zwacket aus diesen allen Frederus ein Stücklein, die Auflegung der Hände, welch eine Ceremonia, und an ihn selbst nicht nöthig ist. Braucht also *fallaciam divisionis*, und machet ein Loch in die Kirchen-Ordnung, mit diesem Schein: Dieweil diese Ceremonia, Hand auflegen, nicht nötig sey, so möge ein jeder das ordentliche Ministerium in Kirchen occupiren, er sey verhört oder nicht verhört approbirt oder nicht approbirt und in Summa, die Pommerische Kirchenordnung sey ein *Laqueus conscientiae*, die unnöthige Dinge nötig mache.—Diewell denn Frederus diese Geschwindigkeit gefährlich brauchet, sprechen wir, daff diese Sophisterey unrecht sey das nöthige mit solchen Schein des unnöthigen zugleich in Hauffen stoffen, gute Ordnung zureissen und diese Unordnung zu stärken, daff unverhörte Leute, Schleicher und aufrührische Stürmer das ordenliche Ministerium in Kirchen occupiren, Und wiewol die Auflegung der Hände an ihr selbst nicht nötig ist, und gleichwol nun in den Kirchen, und sonderlich in Pommern aufgericht ist, als eine *publicatio* und *approbatio* des Beruffs, dazu eine äußerliche Ceremonie gehört: So solte dennoch Magister Frederus diese Gemaine Weise, darin kein Mißbrauch noch Mißverstand ist, und von Anfang der Welt in der Kirchen, gewesen ist, nicht einen *Laqueum conscientiae* nennen und andere zu Verachtung reitzen. — So weiß er selbst wohl, daff der Haupt-Streit und *Status controversiae* nicht ist von dieser einigen Ceremonien Händ-auflegen, sondern ob diese Unordnung zu dulden sey, daff unbekannte Schleicher,, Anführische oder andere unexaminierte aufstehen mögen im ordentlichen Kirchen Ampt, und dazu mit diesem gesuchetn Sophistischen Schein, daff unser Ordnung ein *Laqueus conscientiae* sey.” Quoted in Richter, *Luther und die Ordination*, p. 97 seq.

lands for the maintenance of an orderly ministry and for lawful appointment to the offices of the Church. Furthermore the government and the pastors are in duty bound to God, because of their office faithfully to hold it fast and to hinder disorder. And no one shall assume or exercise the open ministry of the Church in these Churches of Pommerania, that have their fixed Church Order and usages, unless he first has been lawfully ordained, according to apostolic usage, with prayer and the laying on of the hands of the priesthood. — It is also manifest that there is a difference between the vocation or election of men, which is accomplished through christian government or others appointed thereto, with the consent and council of the other pastors, and the ordination, which is performed by the priesthood, and includes the examination of life and doctrine, and the proclamation of the call, which is done in these Churches by prayer and the laying on of hands, and with the reading of God's commands and promises concerning the office of the ministry." "

“Bekennet derowegen der Synodus, daß Priester-Ordination, die nach unser Pommerschen Kirchen-Ordnung mit dem Gebet und Auflegung der Hände geschieht, Christlich gut und heilsam ist, und in diesen Landen zu Rehaltung des ordentlichen Ministerii, und zu rechtmäßiger Bestellung der Kirchen-Aemter nothwendig muß erhalten werden. Daß auch die Obrigkeit und Kirchen-Diener von Gottes wegen nach ihrem Ampt schuldig seyn, getreulich darob zu halten und der Unordnung zu wehren. — Und daß niemand in diessen Pommerschen Kirchen, so ihre gewisse Kirchen-Ordnung haben und gebrauchen, das öffentliche Kirchen-Ampt annehmen oder gebrauchen solle, er sey denn zuvor rechtmäßig nach der Apostolischen Weise mit dem Gebet und Auflegung der Hände von der Priesterschaft ordiniret. — Es ist auch offenbahr, daß Unterscheid ist zwischen der Vokation oder Election der Personen, welche geschieht durch Christliche Obrigkeit oder andere dazu verordnet mit Rath und Vulbort (Bewilligung) der andern Pfarrherrn und zwischen der Ordination, die von der Priesterschaft geschieht, und begreiff Examen von Lehr und Leben, und Publikation des Berufs, welche geschieht in diesen Kirchen mit Gebet und Hand-auflegen, und mit Verlesung der Gebot und Verheissungen Gottes vom Predigt-Ampt.” Riet-schl, *Luther und die Ordination*, p. 98.

Then follow these explanations as to why ordination is a good and useful custom.

First: The established order of the Pommeranian Kirchenordnung, which could not be disregarded without offence, danger and disorder.

Secondly: Ordination is the regular and orderly approval and publication of the call by which the vocation is confirmed and established, after the person has been found fitted for the office. Thus the Office of the Church is lawfully delegated and both the Church and the one who is thus lawfully ordained are assured that God will work effectually through his voice, and will guide him by His spirit, so that he will be faithful. As a part of the ordination the laying on of hands is then defended as a praiseworthy custom even though it be not essential. "Since it is not unchristian and is found in our Church Order, it shall neither be omitted nor amended among us. The laying on of hands is to be considered not simply by itself but it is necessary to keep in mind that the one who has been called is thereby unreservedly inducted into his office."⁴⁵

Thirdly: The consolation of ordination for those ordained is pointed out, which consolation arises from the knowledge that as those who have been called by the Church they can comfort themselves with the promises of God that He will work effectually through their preaching and that He will direct and defend the office of the ministry against the gates of hell.

Fourthly: "It is also evident and certain that priestly ordination is the most important means by which ecclesiastical discipline, obedience, good order and peace may be maintained among the ministry, and that through the examination all false

⁴⁵ "Und weil sie nicht unchristlich und in unser Kirchen-Ordnung begriffen ist, soll sie nicht bei uns abgethan und verändert werden. Man soll die Auflegung der Hände nicht bloß für sich ansehen, sondern denken daß damit der Beruffene in sein Ampt vollkommen instituiert und eingeseizt wird." Rietschl. p. 99.

and strange teachings will be prevented. For if it were to be weakened, despised or abolished, a wild abominable, disorderly character would break in on the preaching office, so that sneaks, turbulent men, incompetent, untested, intemperate people would usurp the offices and great calamities would follow in Church and government. Likewise the common people would expel faithful teachers, according to their whims, and would set up in their place teachers having itching ears. And finally among the Church officers the ministry would become a wild mob of naughty folk of whom no one would want to listen to another.” *

The conclusion sums up the matter thus: “Because of the reasons that have been given, to which many others might be added, it is clear and undisputable, that whoever attempts to exercise the ministry here in Pommerania without apostolic ordination does wrong. For he acts against good order and separates himself from those who possess *in ordinaria potestate*, and great injury, tumult, offence and dangerous evil examples will follow. ——— This rule is certain and true, that wherever the Church of Christ exists, there must be a lawful call and ordination to the ministry. ——— Moreover it cannot be claimed that in our churches the one who has been called lawfully by the government, is sufficiently ordained if prayer only be made for him from the pulpit. For we have shown above that the

* “Das ist auch gewiß und offenbahr, daß die Priester-Ordination das fürnehmste Mittel ist, dadurch *Ecclesiastica Disciplina*. Gehorsam, gute Ordnung und Ruhe unter den Kirchen-Dienern erhalten, und durch das Examen aller falschen und Fremden Lehre Lehre Gewehret wird. Denn wenn dieselbige geschwächet, verachtet oder abgethan ist, so muß ein wild, wüst, unordentlich Wesen im Predigt-Ampt einreissen, daß Schleicher, aufrührische, untüchtige, unverhörte, vermessene Leute werden die Aempter an sich reissen, und wird großer Jammer in Kirchen und Regiment folgen, Auch würde der gemeine Hauffe treue Lehrer ihres Gefallens ausstossen und andere nach der Lust, da ihnen die Ohren nach jucken aufstellen. Und endlich wird das Ministerium unter den Kirchen-Dienern ein wilder Hauffe werden unartiger Leute, derer keiner den andern hören wolle.” Rietschl, p. 99.

vocation or election of persons must be distinguished from ordination. The vocation of the government, even when it takes place with the counsel of the preachers, is not enough for a lawful institution, but, according to our Church Order, there belongs to it the presentation, examination, publication of the call, which in this Church should be with prayer and the laying on of hands, that the one who is called may be lawfully, regularly and completely inducted and confirmed in his Church.”⁴

These decisions of Greifswald have always been considered of the greatest importance and were largely determinative for most later practice. The legal requirements of later times are thus indicated by Benedict Carpozov in his *Jurisprudencia Ecclesiastica*, Lib. I, Tit. III, Def. XXII, p. 37, as he differentiates five steps in the constituting of a pastor: 1, nomination or election; 2, vocation; 3, examination; 4, ordination; 5, installation.

VII. The Question of Reordination.

Little direct reference is to be found to this question because the occasion for considering it rarely arose. Before

⁴“Aus erzählten Ursachen, deren auch mehr könnten angezeigt werden, ist klar und unwidersprechlich daff der, so unordinirt allhie in Pommern des Kirchen-Ampts allein auf Vokation der Obrigkeit sich annimmt, und die Kirchen-Aempter ohne gedachte Apostolische Ordination zu verwalten sich unterstehet, unrecht thut. Den er handelt wider gute Ordnung, und sondert sich abe von den, die in ordinaria potestate sitzen und erfolgen groß Schaden, Unruhe, Aergerniß und böse schädliche gefährliche Exempel ——— Diese Regel ist wahr und feste: Allenthalben da die Kirche Christi ist, da muß auch seyn rechtmäßige Vocation und Ordination zum Predig-Ampt. ——— Auch kann das in diesen Kirchen nicht recht gesagt noch ausgeführt werden, daff der von der Obrigkeit rechtmäßig vociret ist, genugsam ordiniret sey, wenn nur von der Cantzel für ihn gebetet ist: Denn wir haben oben gesagt, daff die *Vocatio vel Electio Personae* unterschieden muß werden von der Ordination. Die Vokation der Obrigkeit, wenn sie gleich mit Rath der Prediger geschieht, ist sie doch nicht genug zu rechtmäßiger Insetzung: Sondern es gehöret dazu laut unser Kirchen-Ordnung, *Praesentatio, Examen, Publicatio vocationis quae in his Ecclesiis fit oratione et impositione manuum*, damit der Beruffene rechtmäßig, ordentlich und vollkommen in sein Kirchen-Ampt instituiret und bestätigt wird.” Rietschl, p. 100.

there was a sharp line of demarcation between Rome and the evangelicals, and until there was a clear confession separating the true Church from the false, the question could not arise. Even after the publication of the Augsburg Confession the status of previously ordained priests was not determined till they had come to the knowledge of the truth as it was once more purely taught and then they took their place either with the true Church, which rightly confessed the Catholic and Apostolic faith and for which they had been ordained, even when they did not appreciate it in its purity, or else turned from the Catholic teaching and united with the heresy of Rome. Till they took such a step they rightfully belonged to the evangelical Church as this Church was the lawful continuation of the Church Catholic as it had come from Apostolic times. With the next generation it became another question. Then they were explicitly ordained by Rome with an obligation to her errors such as had not formerly existed, before the Reformation had compelled a determination of truth as distinct from the errors that had been tolerated or encouraged beside it in the unreformed Church. It was the difference between an unreformed Church and one that had repudiated reformation, between one where the truth was obscured and one where portions of the truth were expressly rejected. Practice varied considerably. Melancthon and Major in the previously quoted opinion of November 1, 1555, had spoken against the reordination of those in the office, but this was not a clear case as these were men in the ministry of the Church of the Augsburg Confession, who had been admitted without the laying on of hands, but with the other essentials of ordination. His opinion did not excuse the irregularity in their case, neither did he approve its repetition as is shown by the previously quoted statements. In this opinion Melancthon and Major say concerning such persons: "If they are satisfactory, that is if they teach correctly, their ministry is effective and they should not be compelled to receive

the public rite of ordination, lest doubt be aroused in the Church concerning their ministry.”⁴⁸ It must be carefully noted that this applied only to those in the evangelical Church and not to those coming from other confessions.

In fact reordinations actually took place and had taken place in Wittenberg itself. The reasons for such reordinations are not known but their occurrence is certain. One of the most conspicuous cases was the reordination of Geo. Major, of Nüremberg, who was reordained by Luther himself, on the 19th Sunday after Trinity, 1537.

At the beginning of the next century there is one very curious case on record. A Lutheran candidate for the ministry had requested and obtained ordination from a nearby Roman bishop, and then wanted to serve the Lutheran Church. Ulrich, Duke of Mecklenburg, asked for an opinion on the subject from the faculty of Rostock. In their reply of August 8, 1601, they take this position: “Gracious Lord, since the said N. N. betook himself to a papish and ungodly bishop, and as the certificate witnesses, requested and received from him *ordinationem ad omnes sacros ordines*, but as the doctrine and the Holy Sacraments, which in his pastorate, he is to conduct according to the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures and according to the institution of the Lord Christ, in the true Church of God, is not mentioned in the certificate, and moreover because the papish opinion concerning holy orders includes many other ungodly things and above all because this ordination was concluded and confirmed by the abomination of a papal mass, we opine, because of these theological considerations and after a careful consideration of the case in its various bearings, that such an ordination cannot be held as valid and Christian in our Church.

⁴⁸ “Si sunt idonei i. e. si recte docent, valet eorum ministerium et non sunt cogendi ad recipiendum publicum ritum ordinationis, ne adducantur Ecclesiae in dubitationem, de eorum ministerio,” Corp. Ref. VIII, p. 597.

Rather it is desirable, both to maintain the glory of God and the good of the Church and to avoid offence and the injury of consciences, that N. N. because of his present call, according to the provisions of Your Grace's Church Order, be regularly ordained to the office of the ministry, after a proper preceding examination, and thereupon be installed in his parish at N." The opinion was followed and he was reordained.*

From the Lutheran conception of ordination, as it has been exemplified in our preceding quotations, certain consequences follow. Reordination cannot be objected to on the ground of the 'validity of orders' previously conferred, since we do not recognize the doctrine of "holy orders," and every recognition of previous ordination by a communion which does not confess the pure teaching of the Gospel, is in danger of falling into a tacit approval of this very mechanical and sacramental conception of ordination. As the laying on of hands is only part of a series of steps, all of which belong to ordination, it becomes an absurdity to insist on the preceding steps, as we must, and then omit the final one, which is the confirmation of what has

* "Dieweil denn gnädiger Fürst und Herr/ oftgedachter N. N. sich zu dem Päbstischen und Gottlosen Bischoffe verfüget/ und die *ordinationem ad omnes sacros ordines*, wie das Testimonium auffweiset/ von ihm gebeten und erlanget/ aber im Testimonio nicht gedacht wird der Lehre und der heiligen Sacramenten/ die er in seinem Predigamte/ nach der Prophetischen und Apostolischen Schrift führen/ und nach des Herrn Christi Einsetzung/ in der wahren Kirchen Gottes verreichen sol/ viel mehr aber die *Sacri ordines*, auf Papistische Meyung/ viel andere abgöttische Dinge in sich begreifen/ und über das alle diese ordination mit einer Paptistischen Greuel Messe confirmiret und bescholffen ist. Als achten wir es/ aus oberzehnten *judiciis Theologicis*, und sonst nach fleißiger Erwegung dieser Sachen und aller Umständen/ dafür: Das solche ordination in unsern Kirchen nicht vor gültlich und Christlich gehalten werden könne: Sondern/ daff zu Erhaltung Gottes Ehre and der Kirchen wohlfarth/ auch zu Verhütung allerhand Ergernüß und Verletzung der Gewissen/ nützlicher sey/ daff er N. N. wegen jetziger Vocation, nach laut E. F. G. Kirchen ordnung/ auff vorhergehendes gebührlisches Examen/ rechtmäßig zum Predigamte ordiniret, und dann darauff zu seinem Pfarramte zu N. instituiret werde. —. Dedeken, *Thesaurus Cons.* v. I, p. 751.

gone before. We cannot accept the doctrine nor examination of those who are in error and who repudiate our confessions, consequently we cannot substitute their public attestation, in ordination, of a candidate's doctrinal soundness, for our own. The ordination in the narrower sense is only the approval of the call and the certification of the candidate's moral and doctrinal soundness. Here the Church vouches for these qualifications by a public act. We certainly cannot accept the standards and obligations of those in error, we insist on a call within our own Church and on our own examination and doctrinal obligation, then it follows as the night the day, that we must give them the same public attestation that is given to those trained in our midst. There is, in fact, all the more reason for it.

The objection to reordination, when it does not spring from a sacramental conception of ordination usually arises from laxity and a false liberalism. It should be self evident that if we cannot accept the decisions of those holding doctrinal errors but must examine men according to our own standards, that we then cannot accept their commissioning and approval of men but must add our own. Otherwise we would have to accept their decisions and thus approve their false teachings. We must furthermore, to keep in the clear on the whole matter, insist that the laying on of hands is only a part of the whole act of ordination, which includes the preceding vocation, examination and obligation, and that we have no right to dismember the whole complete transaction. As we alone can pass on the qualifications of those who are to be set apart for our ministry so we alone can set them apart for the office of the ministry in the Church of the Augsburg Confession. The whole question is being stood on its head when we insist that we must repeat the preliminary steps but let the final one, which absolutely depends on the preceding ones, to those whom we do not believe qualified to pass a correct doctrinal judgment on the fitness of the one who is to be ordained. Neither is it right

that we should deny to those whom we receive the same stamp of approval, the same public commission and testimonial, that, by the laying on of hands, we give to those who have always been of our faith. Neither should we withhold from them the prayers and blessings that are there offered and given. This inverted form of procedure only results in a mutilated monstrosity and is an infraction of the regular order of the Church.

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE

Just to show how these views came to be the normal opinion of the Church we will give a few quotations from Chemnitz and Gerhard, without translating them, for the information of those who may be specially interested but who may not have access to the material.

I. The position of Martin Chemnitz, as developed in the *Loci, Locus, De Ecclesia, § De doctoribus et Auditoribus Ecclesiae*, Cap. IV. Wittenberg ed. 1623. Pars Tertia.

"Quod ergo ad vocationem attinet, certum est ex verbo Dei, neminem in Ecclesia audiendum esse, qui non legitime sit vocatus, sive id factum sit immediate, sive mediate." p. 129.

"Objiciunt quoque. Sed Christus omnes fidelis fecit sacerdotes.— Et Petrus seipsum interpretatur; Christianos omnes esse Sacerdotes: non ut omnes promiscue sine peculiari vocatione ministerio fungantur, sed ut offerant spirituales hostias etc." p. 130.

"Sed ea, quae ad publicum ministerium verbi et sacramentorum pertinent administrare, non est in genere omnibus Christianis mandatum." p. 130.

"Ministerium verbi est ipsius Dei, quod ipse per ordinaria media et organa in Ecclesia sua vult exercere." p. 130.

"Omnino igitur necesse est, si vis fidelis Ecclesiae pastor esse, ut certus sis, Deum velle tua opera uti etc. p. 131.

As many gifts are required for the direction of the Church so the vocation is important because, "Qui vero legitimam vocationem habet, potest tranquilla conscientia Deum invocare, et certam exauditionem exspectare." p. 131.

It assures of the aid of the Holy Ghost. "Ostium mihi apertum est. Quare? quia ostiarius, Spiritus S. aperuit. Joh. 10. v. 3 per legitimam vocationem." p. 131.

"Porro postquam semel hanc materiam de vocatione ministerium ingressi sumus; oportet nos etiam paucis attingere illam questionem:

Penes quem proprie jus et potestat sit vocandi et mittendi ministros Verbi et Sacramentorum," p. 131. The right belongs to God alone. He discusses the matter of an immediate call and shows how the claim of the fanatics of his day to such a call was untenable. "Quod si quis quaerat. Num etiam hoc nostro tempore vocatio immediata expectanda sit, ei respondendum censeo. Nos sane non decere liberrime voluntati et infinite potentiae Dei aliquid praescribere. Sed tamen non habemus mandatum, quod quidem ad nos pertineat, ut exspectemus immediatam vocationem: nec habemus promissionem, Deum velle hoc tempore mittere operarios in messem suam per immediatam vocationem: Sed per Apostolos tradidit et Ecclesiae praescripsit certam formam, quomodo nunc velit mittere et vocare ministros, nimirum per mediatam vocationem. Neq; etiam opus nunc est immediata vocatione. Deus enim omnino vult, ut ministerium usque ad consummationem seculi, alligatum sit ad illam vocem doctrinae, quae a filio Dei accepta, et Apostolis immediate vocatis Ecclesiae tradita est. Galat 1, v. 8 etc. ———

"Mediata vocatio est, quando minister aliquis, non immediate per ipsum Deum, sicut Prophetae et Apostoli, sed a DEO per ordinaria media, legitimo modo ad ministerium Ecclesiae vocatur.

"Et Habet haec mediata vocatio certa et solida fundamenta in verbo Dei. Apostoli enim per Ecclesiae suffragia custodiebant presbyteros in singulis Ecclesijs Actor, 14, v. 22. Et Timotheo commendatur ministerium Ecclesiae, per impositionem manum presbyteri, I Timoth. c. 4 v. 14. Nam Apostoli ratione suae vocationis non poterant manere in uno aliquo loco, et ibi tantum docere, sed oportebat eos etiam ad alios populos transire, et Evangelium omnibus gentibus annunciare. Interim tamen sicubi Ecclesiam plantarunt, eam non sine Doctore reliquerunt. Quid ergo? Num exspectarunt, donec illi a Deo vocarentur immediate? Minime, sed per suffragia Ecclesiae elegerunt viros doctos et idoneos, et illis depositum suum commendarunt. Id vero fiebat per impositionem manuum presbyterii, seu per congregationem presbyterorum, qui non tantum fuerunt illi, qui laborunt in verbo, sed alli selecti et honesti viri, EIN AUS-SCHUS, quibus nomine totius Ecclesiae negotia ad Ecclesiam spectantia commendata erant." pp. 132-133.

"Certo et manifeste constat, cum ex scripturae mandatis, tum exemplis Tit. 1. v. 5. 1 Tim. 4. v. 14. 2 Tim. 2. v. 2. Act: 14. v. 22. eos, qui jam sunt in ministerio et profitentur sacram doctrinam adhibendos esse, quando per mediatam vocationem alicui commendandum est ministerium." p. 134.

Non tamen licet Christiano et pio magistratui, sine voluntate et consensu ministerii, et reliquae Ecclesiae, vocare et constituere ministros in Ecclesia. Nam sicut Pontifex Romanus cum suis commisit sacrilegium in eo, quod electionem et vocationem ministrorum eripuit Ecclesiae, et ad se solum suosq; transtulit." —

Ita tribulenti et seditiose Anabaptista minime recte faciunt, qui vocabulo Ecclesiae (der Gemein) intelligunt tantum promiscuam multitudinem excluso ministerio et pio magistratu. Nam apud ipsos regnat inscitia, cum seditiosa malitia conjuncta. Ecclesia n. est corpus complectens omnia membra Christi Eph. 1. v. 22. et 4. v. 12. Non igitur vel ministris solis, et soli magistratui, vel imperitiae et temeritati solius promiscuae multitudinis, subjicienda est electio et vocatio ministrorum Ecclesiae, sed sit et maneat penes totam Ecclesiam, servato tamen debito ordine." p. 134.

Postremo etiam de hac quaestione aliquid addendum est: Si legitima vocatio hisce quae hactenus diximus constat, quid igitur ritus publicae ordinationis confert? Nam in Ecclesiae Pontifica his ritus exercetur nulla habita ratione vocationis. Et si quis fit ordinatus, putant sufficere, ut habeat potestatem docendi, absolvendi, porrigendi Sacramenta, licet careat legitima vocatione. Contra, non tantum inter Anabaptistas sunt, qui hunc ritum prorsus abjecerunt: sed etiam alibi interdum satis acrebe de his disputant. Nem interdum hujusmodi casus incidunt, ut quis habeat vocationem; et impediatur quo minus se conferat ad nobiliores Ecclesiam, in qua accipi, at ritum ordinationis. Quaestio ergo est, An illius ministerium sit evacuatum? Aliqui id affirmant, aliqui negant, cum ordinationis ritus non sit necessarius, modo vocatio sit legitima.

Sed prope eos qui currunt et non sunt missi, vocatio debet habere publicum Ecclesiae testimonium, Et ritus ordinationis nihil aliud est, quam talis publica testificatio, qua vocatio illa, in conspectu Dei et ipsius nomine declaratur esse legitima et divina. Et eo ritu, tanquam publica designatione seu renunciatione, ministerium consensu et approbatione totius Ecclesiae, vocatio commandatur. Sic Paulus licet immediate vocatus, tamen ad Ananiam mittitur, qui imponat manus, ut Ecclesiae constet de vocatione, Act. 9 v. 17 et postea Act. 13. v. 3. Cum inter Gentes ablegendus erat, rursus impositione manum ordinarius Gentium Doctor constituitur. Et hic ritus ideo fuit adhibitus, ut publice ejus vocatio declararetur legitima, nec alii consimiliter de ea gloriarentur. Si itaque hoc factum est in eo, qui immediate fuit vocatus, quanto magis id facere decet in vocationibus mediatis? Licet ergo ordinatio non faciat vocationem, si tamen quis legitime est vocatus, ille ritus est declaratio et publica confirmatio, vocationem illam quae praecessit, esse legitimam.

“Illo ipso etiam ritu, tanquam solemnī voto et obligatione, is qui vocatus est, obligatur coram Deo, sub testimonio. Ecclesiae ad eam fidelitatem in ministerio praestandam, quam Dominus in dispensationibus suis requirit. I Cor. 4. v. 2.

Praecipue vero servatur iste ritus, ut tota Ecclesia communibus et ardentibus precibus Deo ministerium vocati commendet. Et illas preces, tali ritu peractus, non esse inanes, testatur Moses, Deut. 34. v. 9. Josue repletus est spiritu sapientiae, quia Moses posuit super eum manus suas. I Tim. 4. v. 14. Noli negligere gratiam, quae tibi data est, cum impositione manuum ministerii. 2 Timoth. 1. v. 6 Resuscites gratiam Dei, quae est in te, per impositionem manuum mearum.

“Fatendum sane, nullum extare in Scripturis mandatum Dei, quod hic ritus ordinationi sit adhibendus: nec Deum promississe, se per hunc ritum daturum gratiam, sicut in Baptismo et Coena Domini. Sed libera et indifferenti usurpatione ab Apostolis in Ecclesiam introductus est; non quod ullo modo Dei gratiam vellunt alligere ad ritum, de quo nec mandatum habeant, nec promissionem. Habet tamen ille sua fundamenta in verbo Dei, Gen. 48. v. 14. Jacob benedicturus duobus filiis Joseph, Ephaim et Manasse, extendit manus suas, et imponit eas capitibus eorum. Num. 27, v. 18. et Deut. 34. v. 9. cum Moses Josuam designat successorem coram tabernaculo, in conspectu totius populi ei imponit manus, et hoc ritu denotat eum legitime a Deo electum esse, ut post ejus mortem regnat populum. Et Marc. 10. v. 16. Christus adhibet impositionem manuum, cum benediceret infantibus allatis.”

“Equidem quando Apostolos emisit ad praedicandum, Matt. 10. v. 5. Luc. 9. v. 2. non usus ex externo ritu, sed tantum verbo et gratia illis adfuit. Et postea rursus Matt. 28. v. 19. simpliciter dicit, Ite in mundum universum, docete, Ego vobiscum sum, nec addit ullum ritum, sed tamen Joh. 20. v. 12. cum daret potestatem solvendi et ligandi, insufflavit in ipsos.

“Nec dubium est Apostolos habuisse rationes, cur non et ipsi usi sint sufflatione, ut Christi: Quia nimirum non habuerunt mandatum, et ne quis putaret tali halitue alligatum esse Spiritum Sanctum, sicut Spiritus Sanctus in substantia Filii procedit. Sed potius illum ritum impositionis manum a Patriarchis acceptum, libera usurpatione in Ecclesia retinuerunt, Actor. 13. v. 3. I Tim. 4. v. 14. 2 Tim. 1. v. 6.

“In Veteri Ecclesia mansit illa simplicitas, ut in ordinatione Episcoporum aliud nihil adhiberetur, praeterquam impositio manuum, etc.—

“Nos in nostris Ecclesiis simpliciter et nude retinemus impositionem manuum, et ea tria potissimum, secundum scripturae analogium denotari statuimus.

"1. Illo publico ritu testamur, hoc opus licet sit mediatum, esse tamen vere divinum. Deo enim sistitur persona, et ostenditur, eam per legitima media ab ipso Deo mitti. Neq; enim nostrum, sed Dei opus est, quod peragimus, qui per nos personam illam vocat et ordinat. Et, qui hoc modo vocatus Deo sistitur, is quasi mancipatur Deo ad ministerium. Ut quando victimis olim in veteri Testamento manus fuerunt impositae, tunc devotae quasi fuerunt ad ministerium solius dei.

"2. Hac impositione manuum sistitur Ecclesiae, ut haec quoque admonetur. Deum per hanc personam et ejus ministerium, velle ipsos docere exhortari et consolari. Sacramenta administrare, peccata vel absolvere vel ligare. In summa, Deum velle per hunc efficacem esse, et homines ad coelestem vitam deducere. Et quemadmodum Deus Mosi dicit, Numer. 27. v. 20. impones Josuae manus, et dabis ei partem gloria tuae, hoc est, auctoritatem, qua tu hactenus ornatus fuisti, dabis successori tuo, ita quoque publice auctoritas coram Ecclesiae tribuitur ei, cui manus sunt impositae.

"3. Propter Publicas preces, ut sint ardentiores, Jacob. 5. v. 16. Oratio justis est ἐνεργουμένη, id est actiosa et efficax. Ut ergo pii excitentur ad preces ardentiores, difficultas hujus muneris ipsis est proponenda quoad carnem, Satanam et mundum, etc. quo magis homines agnoscunt necessariam esse Dei gratiam et divinum auxilium, eo ardentiores sunt in precibus. Igitur quasi in conspectum Dei adducuntur, et Deus ibi per preces admonetur: Tu Deus constituisti ministerium, et gratia tua te adfuturum promisisti: adducimus hunc hominem, per Ecclesiae tuae suffragia legitime ad verbi et Sacramentorum ministerium vocatum, admonemus itaque te, ut juxta tuam promissionem, Spiritu et gratia tua velis ipsi adesse. Et hujusmodi preces non inanes esse ostendunt exempla superius adducta, Deut. 34. v. 9. 1 Tim. 4. v. 14. 2 Tim. 4. v. 6." pp. 137-138.

The same ideas illustrated by a great mass of examples from the history of the Church are to be found in the *Examen*, Pars II, *Locus XIII, De Sacramento Ordinis*, Ed. Preuss, pp. 473-488.

II. The views of John Gerhard.

Gerhard discusses ordination and the ministry at great length in the *Loci*, (*Locus XXIV*), but the treatment as a whole is disappointing. While much attention is paid to Bellarmine and later writers, he says little that has not been said previously, and much more clearly, by Chemnitz.

He devotes some space (three pages in the Cotta Ed.) to an argument that heretics are not to be reordained. It is one of the weakest

things in Gerhard and an almost isolated position among the dogmaticians, but for the sake of completeness and fairness we will give the main argument.

"Nos in hac quaestione sic procedimus: Ubiunque adhuc aliqua Deo colligitur et conservatur ecclesia, ibi per impositionem manuum presbyterii et publicas ecclesiae preces collata ordinatio pro rata habenda, ac proinde non est iteranda, quamvis ipsum presbyterium sive ministerium illius ecclesiae non sit undique purum et ab omnibus erroribus liberum. 1. Quia ordinatio non confertur privato presbyterii, sed publico totius ecclesiae nomine. Jam vero etiam illis in locis, in quibus ministerium non est undique purum, et ab omnibus erroribus liberum, colligitur et conservatur Deo ecclesia, modo retineatur baptismus, decalogus, symbolum apostolicum, historia passionis dominicae et alia substantialia ac fundamentalia doctrinae christianae capita, ut in tractatu de ecclesia ostendimus. Ergo etiam illis in locis, in quibus ministerium non est undique purum, et ab omnibus erroribus liberum, ordinatio ecclesiae nomine conferri potest, et collata pro rata est habenda. 2. Ubiunque substantialia alicujus ritus observantur, de ritus integritate nulla debet esse dubitatio. Sed in ordinatione facta a ministerio non undique puro substantialia illius ritus observantur, puta preces solemnes ecclesiae et impositio manum. Ergo ibi de ritus integritate nulle potest esse dubitatio. 3. Si ab haereticis baptismi sacramentum dari censetur integrum, ut nulla repetitione opus sit, modo substantialia illius sacramenti fuerint observata, adpersio scilicet aquae in nomine Patris, Filii et Spiritus sancti facta; multo magis ritus ordinationis ab haereticis collatae intiger consensus, ut nulla repetitione opus sit, modo substantialia illius ritus observentur. Sed verum prius, ut ostendimus in tractatu de baptismo § XXIII. ergo et posterius Connexio *majoris* patet ex superioribus nimirum quia ordinatio non est sacramentum aliquod vere et proprie sic dictum, quale est baptismus, sed ritus duntaxat ecclesiasticus. 4. Qui in vet. test. a sacerdotibus variarum opinionum et corruptelarum labe maculatis ad ministerium sacrum ordinabantur ac consecrabantur, illorum ordinatio censebatur rata; Christus enim Matth. XXIII. 2. *in cathedra Moysi scribas ac pharisaeos sedere dicit*, hoc est, per sacerdotalem consecrationem (Sic! Scribes and Pharisees through a sacerdotal consecration! Gerhard must have been nodding.) ad sacri ministerii functionem evectos esse, quorum tamen antecessores, a quibus ordinati ac consecrati fuerunt, variorum errorum et corruptelarum coeno fuerunt immersi. Ergo idem iudicium fieri debet de ordinatione in nov. test. ab haereticis facta." Cotta Ed. Tom. 12, Locus XXIV, pp. 160-161.

If we examine these four reasons in detail their weakness is immediately apparent. The first fails to take into account that, while their ministry may have been with results, because of the efficacy inhering in the Word, nevertheless, we could not accept the ordination of others "in the name of the whole Church" unless we would accept their examination and false doctrinal obligations as being in the name of "the whole Church," which we certainly cannot do.

The second, with its insistence on the essentials of the rite, gives a false, sacramental aspect to the whole transaction, and leans dangerously towards the doctrine of "orders."

The third is a complete non sequitur. Baptism is a sacrament whose efficacy depends on the Word and not on the ministrant, his personal beliefs nor his approval by the Church in ordination. On the other hand ordination is not a sacrament but a part of church order, and has as one of its purposes the approval of the doctrinal soundness of the person ordained. God's grace can be administered in the Sacrament by a heretic, for his heresy cannot invalidate that grace, unless it is accompanied by an open disavowal of the meaning of the words used, or an explicit denial of their teaching, but no heretic can certify as to the doctrinal soundness of another, who has shared his heresy. He cannot testify as to his fitness to teach the true faith. Such previous ordination actually becomes a certificate of error and a testimonial of unsoundness in the faith.

The fourth is as astonishing in its historical viewpoint as in its misapplication of the Lord's words concerning the Scribes and Pharisees. They were to be obeyed as they sat in Moses' seat and actually taught his law, and not as they perverted it. Furthermore they belonged to a religious system, an ecclesia, that outwardly confessed the truth, no matter how much inwardly they might pervert it. This passage can be applied against Donatists but not in favor of separated errorists.

On the basis of these materials, a committee, appointed by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and composed of Drs. Haas, Offermann and Mattes, proposed for discussion at the meeting of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania the following theses:

We recommend the adoption of the following principles for the future guidance of the Ministerium in the reception of ministers coming from other Religious Bodies:

I. The Office of the Ministry of the Word and Sacraments is not derived from the Spiritual Priesthood, but is a special pastoral office instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and is a necessary consequence of the bestowal of the Word and Sacraments.

II. The Ministry is an office of the whole Church and not simply of a group in the Church. It does not represent simply a single congregation, nor is its authority derived from a group of the laity by delegation, nor is it transmitted from a group of clergy by a sacerdotal succession.

III. The Ministry is not only entrusted with the administration of the Word and Sacraments and the care of individual souls, but it is also appointed for the guidance and direction of the Church, and is pre-eminently a teaching office, which is especially charged with the transmission and uncorrupted preservation of the deposit of Divine Revelation, first bestowed through apostles, evangelists and prophets.

IV. In the consecration of candidates to the Office of the Ministry the whole Church must have a part, both Ministry and laity, but the Ministry, as the representatives of the whole Church, and as those who are especially charged with the preservation of the purity of doctrine, have the pre-eminent part, and their participation is ordinarily essential.

V. No one has a right to assume the Office of the Ministry to himself, but he must be rightly called by the Church and receive the approval of the Church.

VI. The confirmation of the call, or ordination in the wider and proper sense includes several steps, and these steps form a complete whole which should not be mutilated. It should include the following elements: 1, The vocation; 2, The examination; 3, The obligation; 4, The public attestation, with the laying on of hands, to which the name of ordination has frequently been restricted, but which is only the final step of the whole process.

VII. The laying on of hands, or ordination in the narrower sense, is the public and formal attestation by the Church of what has preceded. It does not confer a sacerdotal character, but it is the official consecration of the individual to the work of the Ministry and

his official induction into the Holy Office by those who represent the entire Church. There are a number of reasons why it cannot be dispensed with:

a. Because of apostolic usage and institution it has always been the established order of the Church, since the days of the apostles.

b. It is the orderly and official publication to the Church of the preceding vocation, and sets on it the stamp of the approval and confirmation by the whole Church.

c. It is a witness to the one who has been called that he rightfully and lawfully holds his office, and that all the promises God has made concerning it will apply efficaciously to his own ministry.

d. It is a protection of the Church against false teachers, and a testimonial to the congregations of the moral fitness and doctrinal soundness of the one who has been examined and obligated to the Confessions. It must never be forgotten that ordination is a commissioning to preach a certain body of doctrine confessed by the ordaining communion.

VIII. Those entering our Ministry from the Ministry of other communions should be ordained for the following reasons:

a. We cannot accept a doctrine of holy orders or of any form of sacerdotal succession.

b. We cannot receive those who come from the Ministry of other communions unless called by our Church, nor can we accept the preceding examination, confessional requirements or doctrinal approval of those who err in some portion of the faith.

c. If we must insist on the first steps of the whole act of ordination we cannot leave it uncompleted, nor can we accept the final certification of those whose preceding examination we cannot accept.

d. We are in duty bound to give the same approval and public attestation to those coming from other communions as to those coming from our own congregations. There is, in fact, all the more reason for doing so.

e. The prayers ordinarily offered for those commissioned by us as ministers should not be withheld from this particular class.

f. Even an objection to the liturgical form ("I now commit unto thee the Holy Office of the Word and Sacraments," etc.) is not

strictly valid since it is the ministry of a certain confession to which they are being commissioned, and that ministry cannot be delegated by those who reject that confession.

IX. The whole question is one of church order, which in its application, however, must be based on and determined by the faith of the Church.

X. Each individual case must be judged on its own merits but always in accordance with the principles stated above.

3270 TB 364

1-27-00 32180 FS

Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries



1 1012 01173 3633

